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**THE POEMS OF
WILLIAM COWPER**

THE .POEMS.
OF
WILLIAM COWPER *Brown*

EDITED
WITH AN INTRODUCTION
AND NOTES BY
J. C. BAILEY
WITH TWENTY-SEVEN ILLUSTRATIONS



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TO
THE REVEREND WILLIAM COWPER JOHNSON
RECTOR OF YAXHAM
AND HONORARY CANON OF NORWICH CATHEDRAL
THIS EDITION
OF THE POEMS OF HIS KINSMAN
WILLIAM COWPER
IS GRATEFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED
BY HIS FRIEND
THE EDITOR

GENERAL



PREFACE

THE chief aims of this edition of the poems of Cowper have been to present a more accurate text than has hitherto been accessible, to record such various readings as are afforded by manuscripts or by the different editions, and to add some illustrations both of the poems and of the poet's life from unpublished papers which have been placed at my disposal.

Three new pieces of verse are included, the humorous lines addressed to Joseph Hill, given on p. 10, and the two additional translations from Milton, given on pp. 596, 597. These have never been printed before. The same is true, so far as I know, of the four lines intended by Cowper to be inserted in *Anti-Thelyphthora*, which are here given in the notes to that poem, as well as of a large number of other new versions and various readings given in the notes. The present edition also includes a number of pieces which, though previously printed in magazines, or in Mr. Thomas Wright's little book, *The Unpublished and Uncollected Poems of William Cowper*, have not hitherto appeared in any collected edition of the poems. Such are *A Song of Mercy and Judgment*, p. 30; *On the Trial of Admiral Keppel*, p. 412; *An Address to the Mob on the Occasion of the late Riot at the House of Sir Hugh Palliser*, p. 412; *The Bee and the Pineapple*, p. 413; the "Fragment," on p. 414; the lines *To Sir John Fenn*, on p. 488; the new stanza in the lines *To Mary*, p. 503; the alternative version of the opening of *The Doves* given in the note to that poem (p. 685), and the fragment, *Against Interested Love*, given in the note on p. 719.

On the other hand, beside the translation of Homer, the omission of which was necessitated by consideration of space

there are three poems which have been ascribed to Cowper, but are excluded from this edition. They are these: some Latin lines on loyalty given by Mr. Wright in his *Unpublished Poems*, and omitted here as being a mere boyish Latin exercise; a piece entitled *A Thunderstorm*, also given by Mr. Wright, and omitted here because, as I have explained in the introductory note (p. 663), I do not believe it to be Cowper's work at all; and the *Ode Secundum Artem*, which, since Southey's day, has always been included among the works of Cowper, but is, in my opinion, as explained in the note to p. 1, undoubtedly the work of his friend Robert Lloyd. But, in this case, as such good judges as Southey and Mr. R. Bell have unhesitatingly asserted the piece to be by Cowper, it has seemed right to print it in full in the note.

The poems are here printed in the following order. First, *Early Poems*, that is, pieces written by Cowper before the publication of the *Olney Hymns* in 1779. These occupy pp. 1–32. The most important section of them is the series dealing with his love of his cousin Theodora Cowper, and these have here been separated from the rest, and an effort made to arrange them in their probable chronological order. The *Early Poems* are followed by the *Olney Hymns*, which occupy pp. 33–78. Next follows the anonymously published *Anti-Thelyphthora*, with which are here placed four small pieces dealing with the same subject. Then comes Cowper's first published volume, which occupies pp. 85–245. This is followed by the second volume, which includes *The Task*, pp. 246–393, and this again by other pieces printed during the poet's life, pp. 393–410. His original verse is completed by the posthumous poems to be found on pp. 411–509. The remainder of the volume is occupied by the various translations.

Whatever Cowper himself published is here given as he gave it in the original order. For instance, the translations which he printed in his first volume of poems retain their original place. On the other hand, the two translations from Horace which have commonly been given among the *Early Poems* are here

placed with the other translations at the end of the book. In arranging the early and posthumous poems which were not arranged or published by the poet, I have been chiefly guided by chronological considerations. The notes printed at the foot of the text are the poet's own.

The principal previous editions of Cowper which I have consulted in preparing this are the original volumes published during the poet's life ; John Johnson's edition, 1815 ; Southey's large Life and Works, in fifteen volumes, 1836 ; Mr. R. Bell's edition, 1854 ; the Aldine edition, edited by Mr. J. Bruce ; and the Globe edition, edited by Canon Benham. Many others have been occasionally examined, but these have been consulted throughout, and all have helped me in various ways. Southey's, with its small volumes, so easy to handle, and its delightful steel-plate illustrations of people and places connected with Cowper, many of which are here reproduced, is still the pleasantest edition there has ever been of Cowper. And it will be seen by readers of the notes that I believe Southey was right in basing his text upon the earlier editions, and not upon the subsequent corrections as most of his successors have done. The only editor who gives any considerable number of textual variations is Mr. Bruce, and to his labours I am particularly indebted. In this edition, however, an effort has been made, it is believed for the first time, to record all variations of reading that are of the least importance, and, with that object, all editions of any authority have been examined, and all the MSS. to which I have had access carefully collated. In particular, the several manuscript collections of which mention will presently be made, the Ash MSS., the Welborne MSS., the Hill letters, the manuscript of the Milton translations in the British Museum, and the other MSS. in the Museum, have been collated, and their various readings are here for the first time published. It was not in the nature of the case likely that these manuscripts would afford justification or material for any revolutionary interference with the accepted text of Cowper ; and they have not. But the result of their collation, and of a re-examination of the original

editions, has been a text which differs in an appreciable number of cases, some of them of importance, from that which has become generally established. Attention is, of course, drawn to these cases in the notes, where the reasons which have seemed to justify departure from the common text are explained. When mention is made in a note of a MS. or an edition, and no various reading is recorded, it may be assumed that there is none to record.

In an Appendix to the Introduction will be found thirty-five unpublished letters of Cowper.

For these, and for free use of all the memorials of the poet in their possession, I have to offer my warmest gratitude to my friends, the Rev. William Cowper Johnson, Hon. Canon of Norwich and Rector of Yaxham, Norfolk, and the Rev. Henry Barham Johnson, Rector of Welborne, Norfolk. The letters to Joseph Hill were left by Hill's grandson to the grandfather of Mr. Edward Jekyll, of Higham Bury, Ampthill, who kindly allowed me to see them. He subsequently presented them to Canon Cowper Johnson, who has generously placed them entirely at my disposal for the present work. To Canon Johnson I am also indebted for photographs of the portrait by Abbott, of the miniature by Blake, taken from the Romney portrait, of the seal given to the poet by Theodora Cowper, and of the picture by Margaron of the poet's horse and dog, all of which are in his possession, as well as for constant assistance in other ways. The Rev. Henry Barham Johnson is the possessor of a large collection of papers connected with Cowper, many of which, including the letters to John Johnson and his sister, and the copies of poems mentioned in the notes, are in the poet's hand. There are also many valuable notes in the hand of Mr. Johnson's grandfather, John Johnson, the devoted cousin in whose house the poet died. All these have been unreservedly placed at my disposal, and I desire to record my sincere gratitude to Mr. Johnson, as well as to Mrs. Johnson, who gave me the advantage of her wide knowledge of Cowper and his circle. To Mr. Bertram Vaughan Johnson, another grandson of John Johnson,

I am very greatly indebted for the beautiful designs by William Blake, which illustrate the descriptions of Evening and Winter in the fourth book of *The Task*. They were originally done for a fireplace at Yaxham Rectory, the two here given being at each side, and another, since unfortunately destroyed, forming a cross-piece over the fireplace. This last is said to have represented the long bridge at Olney, described at the opening of the same book of *The Task*. Mr. Vaughan Johnson has also very kindly allowed me to reproduce his fine portrait of Cowper by Romney, and the portraits of Sir John and Lady Throckmorton by Downman. For the portrait of Cowper's mother by Heins I have to thank the Rev. Charles Donne, who gave permission for a new photograph to be taken from the original in his possession. I owe very hearty thanks to my friend Mr. E. P. Ash for placing at my disposal the collection of MSS. of Cowper's poems, which came to his family from Mrs. Hill, the widow of Cowper's friend, Joseph Hill. These MSS. are alluded to in the notes as the Ash MSS., but since the notes were printed the collection has passed into the possession of the British Museum.

My acknowledgments are also due to Messrs. Macmillan and Co., who kindly made no objection to the inclusion in this edition of the interesting poem, *To a Lady who wore a Lock of his Hair set in Diamonds* (p. 501), which first appeared in the Globe edition: to Messrs. Bell and Sons for a similar courtesy with reference to the poem *To a Young Lady*, on p. 481: to Mr. Harry Quilter, proprietor of the *Universal Review*, and to Mr. D'Arcy Collyer, the writer of an article in it in June 1890, for readily waiving any objections to my including the poems from the Ash collection (pp. 30. 412-414, 488), which were first printed in that article: and to Mr. Thomas Wright, of Olney, to whom all students of Cowper are indebted for his edition of the poet's letters, for permitting me to make free use of his *Unpublished and Uncollected Poems of William Cowper*.

I have, finally, to thank my friend Mr. Bruce Richmond, for

his great kindness in reading through the proofs, and for suggesting many corrections, only one of which, I think, has received special acknowledgment in the notes.

A note should, perhaps, be added as to the illustrations. Those that are new, the two Blake designs, Blake's miniature after the Romney portrait, the portraits of Sir John and Lady Throckmorton, the picture of Cowper's horse and dog, and the seal given him by Theodora Cowper, have already been mentioned. The seal, it may be said, is a red carnelian, representing Omphale wearing the lion's skin of Hercules. Of the miniature, which was given to Canon Johnson's father by a lady to whose family it had come from Hayley, I should, perhaps, say that it has only recently been recognised as the work of Blake. Mr. W. Roberts, joint author of *Romney: by Humphrey Ward and W. Roberts*, 1904, has lately examined it and expresses the opinion that there can be no doubt that this is the miniature referred to in Hayley's letter to Romney, February 3, 1801, in which he says: "I have taught him (*i.e.*, Blake) to paint in miniature, and in truth he has made a very creditable copy from your admirable portrait of the dear departed Bard" (*i.e.*, Cowper). The letter is quoted in Mr. Roberts' book, vol. ii., p. 35. There can be no doubt, considering the history of the miniature, that this view is correct, and that we have here a curious piece of Blake's work. Of the picture of Cowper's horse and dog I ought, perhaps, to confess that, though the dog has always been known as "Beau," it can hardly be a portrait of the hero of *The Dog and the Water Lily*; for that incident took place in June 1788, when the poet had long ceased to keep a horse.

The remaining illustrations are portraits of various friends of the poet, and landscape views of places connected with him. The original portraits have been reproduced where access to them was obtainable: the rest, like most of the landscapes, are reproduced from the engravings in Southey's and Grimshawe's editions. Some of the landscapes are taken from a beautiful quarto volume published in 1803, entitled *Cowper Illustrated*

by a Series of Views in or near the Park of Weston Underwood, Bucks.

Of the portraits of Cowper three are here reproduced: the fine crayon drawing by Romney, the property of Mr. Bertram Vaughan Johnson; the portrait in oils by Lemuel F. Abbott, the property of Canon Cowper Johnson; and the portrait by Sir Thomas Lawrence, painted in 1793, and exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1795. Where this last is now I have not been able to discover. From Cowper's allusion to it in the letter of November 30, 1793, one of the unpublished letters given in the Appendix to the Introduction, where he calls it "Lawrence's sketch of me," it would appear not to have been an oil painting, but a crayon drawing like the Romney. Lady Hesketh also speaks of it as "Lawrence's charming sketch" (letter of January 16, 1800). It is much to be regretted that its whereabouts seem to be unknown. Meanwhile it is here reproduced from the engraving by Finden.

The portraits by Romney and Abbott are reproduced from the originals. They evidently give us two sides of the man. This, or something like it, was felt from the first, as may be seen from John Johnson's letter written from Hayley's house when the Romney had just been done. (See *Letters of Lady Hesketh concerning William Cowper*, 1901, p. 19.) Johnson speaks of Romney having drawn in crayons "a very capital head" of Cowper, and adds, "a wonderful likeness it is—every one is quite charmed with it—there is a world of character and poetic fire in the countenance: but in my opinion, the likeness is not so strong as that which Abbott painted." Romney, that is, painted the poet, Abbott the man. The two pictures were done about the same time, the Abbott in June or July 1792, and the Romney in August of the same year. The contrast between them is obvious; but, strangely enough, Cowper himself saw it so little that in his Sonnet to Romney he expresses his wonder at "Symptoms none of woe" appearing in Romney's work. To us now, and probably always to all eyes except his own, it exhibits the poet in a moment of imaginative excitement, and

suggests not only the powers to which he owed his fame, but also the tragedy which wrecked his life. The portrait by Abbott, on the other hand, except for the fact that he is represented in the costume of an Archery Club, shows us the man as ordinary people saw him at ordinary moments. All his friends declared this picture to be an admirable likeness. There is a letter of John Johnson to his sister in which he says he has heard from Lady Hesketh that the Bishop of Bristol (Cowper's cousin, Spencer Madan), had told her he would have known Abbott's portrait "had he met it in the streets of London walking sideways or bottom upwards." Johnson himself called it "a good map of the poet's face," and wrote on the back of the picture, which was in his possession: "The author of *The Task* in his sixty-first year represented with astonishing likeness by Lemuel Francis Abbott." Lady Hesketh spoke of it as "by much the strongest likeness I ever saw." And that seems to have been the general feeling. Perhaps the poet's friends preferred remembering him as he faces us in this pleasant but comparatively commonplace serenity to recalling greater and sadder aspects of the features they had loved so well. But those who read Cowper now will naturally keep their heartier gratitude for Romney and be glad that he put the poet and not the honorary Archer into his picture! Anyhow, there they both are for lovers of Cowper to choose between. Cowper is not known to have sat for any other portrait. The miniature he speaks of in one or two letters (February 4, February 15, and June 6, 1789), as about to be taken by Englefeldt was apparently never done. The picture by Jackson at Panshanger is a composition made up from the authentic pictures and of no independent authority. Nor would the head done by Blake for Hayley, if it could be found, have any importance as a portrait. Blake never knew Cowper, and this head was merely one of a series of poets which were, of course, "visions" rather than portraits. It is true that Gilchrist (*Life of Blake*, i. 162) says that it was one of the most interesting; but the interest must have been of a kind which belongs rather to the student of Blake than to the student of Cowper.

There remains the picture by Romney in the National Portrait Gallery. This is not reproduced here, because I cannot bring myself to believe it is a portrait of Cowper at all. My brother-in-law, Mr. Lionel Cust, the Director of the Gallery, has kindly looked up the history of the picture for me, and given me such information as he possesses about it. It appears that it came from a collection belonging to the Romney family sold at Christie's in 1894. It was then catalogued "A Head, possibly Cowper." Sir George Scharf, the then Director of the Gallery, saw it, made inquiries about it, and so entirely convinced himself that it represented Cowper that he bought it from Messrs. Agnew, the purchaser, at the sale, had it cleaned at his own expense, and presented it to the Trustees of the Gallery. The fact that so exceptional a judge of portraits believed in the picture is no doubt a strong point in its favour. But it appears to me to be almost the only one. Sir George Scharf has left no written statement of the grounds on which he formed his opinion. And Messrs. Agnew possess no evidence on the subject. There are no doubt some curious points of resemblance between the face represented and Cowper's face as known from the undisputed portraits. But they seem to exhibit equally striking differences, and the general expression of the picture in the Portrait Gallery appears to me strangely unlike that of any of the others. It has been suggested that the portrait in the Gallery was a first attempt which, not being successful, was set aside, and so remained in Romney's possession and came to his family. But there is no evidence whatever in support of this suggestion, and considerable difficulties in its way. Romney never saw Cowper except for the three or four weeks when they were both staying with Hayley at Eartham. Neither in Cowper's letters, written from Eartham, nor in Hayley's *Life of Cowper*, is there any allusion to any first failure on Romney's part, or any portrait by him other than the well-known one. If any other had existed, and been in Romney's possession, it is certain that Hayley, who was long in close relations with Romney, would have known it

No one who knows anything of Hayley will doubt that, if he had known of it, he would have found some opportunity of mentioning it.

I had already come to the conclusion that no sufficient reason existed for believing the picture in the Portrait Gallery to represent Cowper, when my attention was drawn to a letter by Mr. W. Roberts in the *Athenæum* of February 27, 1900, in which the whole case against it is strongly put. There is more to be said in its favour, perhaps, than Mr. Roberts allows; but, when all possible admissions have been made, the balance seems to me to be so decidedly against it that I have not felt justified in reproducing it with the others in this edition.

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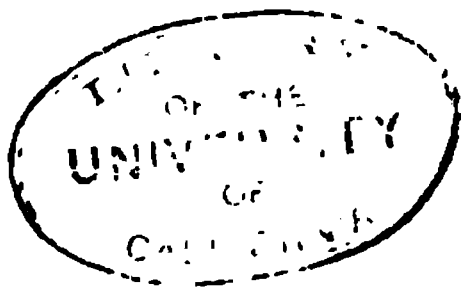
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INTRODUCTION

IT is now more than a hundred years since Cowper died. A century is already a long lease of poetic fame, and it may very well be that there will be found those who will dispute his right to its renewal. Very few poets manage to remain in possession so long. For all but those who make a special study of our own poetic history, Beattie is gone, and Warton, and Mason; and men of greater fame than they—men once so popular as Butler, as Young, as Churchill,—who will now ask the great public to read any of these? And who was Cowper, it will be said, that he is to be one of the rare exceptions to the generally inexorable rule? His wit—indeed, his purely intellectual capacity altogether—was far below that of some of these whom ultimate fame has already rejected. He, more than any of them, was the poet, not of the world, but of a particular sect, and one that has largely passed away. He lived in a dull and obscure country town, among old maids and dissenting clergymen, and knew nothing of the commanding minds of his day. And, it will be added, what originality he had was caught up by greater men, and is superseded by their works. It was against Cowper's final fame that he had Newton and Mrs. Unwin for the companions of his life: it may be thought to be fatal to it that he had Wordsworth for the heir of his poetic inheritance.

Yet the truth is still that he has not been superseded. After all that has been done by others, he remains himself a unique personality, a poetic presence not to be put by. The peculiar impression which he made in his own day on those who understand poetry, he still makes. We may not be able to feel it now with that freshness of contemporary enthusiasm which made even Burns break out, "Is not the 'Task' a glorious poem?"—but it is still there. Time has not effaced it. Larger and brighter luminaries have appeared in the poetical heavens since Cowper first shone there: the places of some of them are not far from his; but not one is near enough to make his smaller light invisible. Johnson said that no man could be written down except by himself; and that is true in more ways than he meant. Not only is no man written down by his detractors, but, if he have any real vital

spark in him, it will not be snuffed out by his admirers, by his imitators, even by the disciples who surpass him. He will still have his own name and place. If Cowper disappears it will not be of the merits of others, but of his own faults, that he will die. If the fine things of the "Task" are ever forgotten, it will not be because there are so many finer things in Wordsworth, but because there are so many less fine in Cowper. No one is more conscious of Cowper's faults than we who most admire and love him. No one is more aware that, if he is to be made secure of the place which really belongs to him, the very first work to be done is one of frank admission. He is being tried for his poetical life, and our first business is to win the confidence of the jury by admitting the minor charges at once. Cowper is often narrow, commonplace, dull, it is said. We fully admit it. He allows himself too often to preach, and his sermons are antiquated, unoriginal, and extremely long. We shall make no attempt to deny it. His criticism of life is too provincial, too sectarian, too entirely uninformed, to have any serious value for us to-day. To none of these counts in the indictment can we make any defence. But to the capital charge, which puts his poetry aside as merely Methodism in verse, an old woman's scolding of a world she knows nothing about, we confidently reply that to see only this in Cowper is to misunderstand him altogether. Methodism, Mrs. Unwin, Newton, Olney, all had their influence upon him, and for good as well as for evil. But the Cowper who lives—the essential vital Cowper, was there before he saw Olney or knew a single Methodist. From the very first, as all who have read his early poems know, he had his own way of looking at things, the way which the "Task" was one day to make famous. Where others made their poetry out of passion, he was to make his out of a quiet affection, which is rather tenderness than love: where others looked to the grand or the sublime for inspiration, he turns always, from the beginning, to simple and humble things. It will be his to show that at a touch, the right touch, the destined touch, they too will turn to the gold of poetry. He will make the common hedgerow take its poetic place by the side of the oak and cedar, rose and lily; and in his hands the daily life of quiet places will bear fruits once demanded only of tragic stories. (He will be the poet of the country and the home.

Yet he never had a home of his own, and few people have had a narrower acquaintance with the country. It is, in fact, all through, by depth, not by breadth, by the intensity of his sympathies rather than by their extent or range, that he made his impression. Out of the memory of a mother whom he had hardly known, he created, forty years after her death, the tenderest tribute of filial love and regret any English mother has ever received. To a woman, who was never more to him than the most intimate of friends, he gave what hardly another poet has given to the woman who has borne

his name and been the mother of his children. The intimacy of his affection found as much to love in the quiet meadows that slope down to the Ouse as Scott found in the beauties of his romantic Borderland, or Wordsworth in the noblest scenery this island can boast. His touch was on humble things and humble people, and it gave immortality, as surely as that of greater men gave it to greater things. Of the universality of Wordsworth, making the bare facts of human life a kind of sacramental bond, he has nothing. But of those sympathies whose very life it is that they are a peculiar possession, our own and not another's, no one ever had more. He lives by the power with which he reveals the strength, the tenderness, the poetry that may be found in the commonest relations of life's every day, by the loving insight which discovered and so affectionately chronicled the charms that make the plainest English landscape a feast of beauty to those who see as he saw. His poetry is a kind of Divine accident. None of the obvious calls that make other men poets operated on him—no inspiration of surroundings, no spur of ambition, no inner sense of a poetic mission. In his early life, verse-writing was only an occasional amusement: in his later years it was only a partner with his spade, his walking-stick, and his box of tools, in the task of keeping the most terrible of diseases at bay. Yet even so, by simple effluence of the poet in him, what he wrote became the greatest poetry of that generation. He made no choice of subject, formed no poetic scheme or plan: one may often wish he had; but that was not the spirit in which he set to work. He made his poetry as he made his incomparable letters, out of anything and nothing, out of just what came into his head: and, happily for us, what came into his head includes, with much that we could wish away, the "Royal George," the sonnet and lines "To Mary," and the great passages of the "Task." He is, all through, an accidental, occasional, only half-conscious poet. For many years before the production of his greatest work, he possessed no library, and read no poetry. What can be more unlike the deliberate self-dedication of Virgil, or Milton, or Tennyson? His sensitive modesty would have shrunk, and no doubt rightly, from any mention of such names, even of the least of them and merely by way of contrast, in connection with his. Yet it is hard to feel sure that, if he could have known himself and his gifts for what they were, he could not have done more with them. As things are, he is a poet almost in spite of himself. And the explanation of that lies in the story of his life.

This is not the place to tell that story over again. But a brief out-line of facts and dates will help towards the full understanding and fair judgment of his poetry. He was born in 1731, at Great Berkhamstead Rectory, in Hertfordshire. His father was the Rev. John Cowper, rector of Berkhamstead, son of Spencer Cowper, a Judge of the Common Pleas, remembered chiefly for his having

gone through the curious experience of being tried for murder. The first Earl Cowper, the Lord Chancellor, was the judge's brother and the poet's great-uncle. Cowper's mother was the daughter of Roger Donne of Ludham, in Norfolk, a family which is believed to be that of the poet Donne, and which has received new literary associations in our own day from the affection felt for some of its members by the poet Edward Fitzgerald. Mrs. Cowper died in 1737; but, though the poet was little more than an infant when he lost her, she had made for herself such a place in his childish heart that he writes, fifty years afterwards, "Not a week passes (perhaps I might with equal veracity say a day) in which I do not think of her." He went first to a local school, where he was unhappy; and then to Westminster, where Lloyd, Churchill, and Colman were among his contemporaries, as were also Hastings and Impey. There seems no doubt that his poem "Tirocinium," which judges public schools so severely, was the product of reflection rather than of memory. On leaving Westminster he was placed with a solicitor, in whose house he lived, and where he had Thurlow, the future Chancellor, for a fellow-pupil. He says that he spent his days chiefly "in giggling and making giggle" with his cousins, the daughters of his uncle Ashley Cowper, to one of whom, Theodora, he soon became attached. Her father would not allow an engagement, objecting to their near relationship. Among the manuscripts of the poet preserved at Welborne Rectory is a curious relic of this disappointment. It is a Latin essay, arguing that marriage between cousins is lawful. The handwriting, it is true, is not the poet's, but that of John Johnson. That fact, however, is far from disproving the poet's authorship, for the box in which it has long been preserved is full of copies by Johnson of his cousin's poems and letters. Moreover, I found it in close company with another Latin essay which is in the hand of Cowper. This is a rough copy of a dissertation on the philosophic thesis of man's control over the forces of matter, and is apparently written as an exercise for the degree of Bachelor of Arts. Both treatises are cast in the form of a speech to a learned company, presided over by a person who is addressed as *Vir doctissime* in the one case, and *doctissime Professor* in the other, but the defence of the marriage of cousins contains no direct references to the Bachelor's degree. Cowper was not at a university. He must therefore have either written the philosophical treatise on behalf of a university friend, or merely have chosen this form as a convenient one for the purpose of his essay. The thesis on marriage, if his work, may have been cast in the same form for the same reason. In any case, whether he wrote it or not, here it is among his papers, and it is difficult not to connect it with this episode in his life. We cannot but be touched as we picture him, drawing up himself, or copying out from some one else, this learned Latin dissertation, full of classical and Biblical lore, and hoping so to

move his recalcitrant uncle and gain his Theodora. No arguments, however, convinced Ashley Cowper, and Theodora never became his wife; but she remained secretly faithful to him through her long life, and carefully preserved the verses he had addressed to her, though she never met or even corresponded with him after he left London. The Latin stanzas, "Heu quam remotus," which take their place here for the first time in a complete edition of his poems, almost certainly refer to her. If that be so, they afford striking proof of how passionately he clung to the memory of that first love, ten years after he had seen its object for the last time, after his life had been twice shattered by the most awful of human diseases, and even after he had so definitely realized that it could be nothing more than a memory as to have contemplated a union of a very different kind with one towards whom his feelings were those of deep but very calm and quiet affection, entirely unlike the passionate ardour with which he had once thought of Theodora. It may be added that the suggestion* that Cowper soon forgot his affection for Theodora, and, for the time at any rate, set his affections elsewhere, seems quite superfluous. It is based on nothing but the jocose Latin letter to Clotworthy Rowley, August, 1758, and its enthusiastic allusion to a certain "puellula amabilis" at Greenwich. But, as the letter mentions that she was only sixteen, we need not take the poet's outburst very seriously. The other sister was Lady Hesketh, the intimate friend of the poet's latter years. In 1752, he went to live in the Temple, and, in 1754, was called to the Bar. But he made no attempt to practise, and passed his time in literary and social amusements. He belonged to a club, called the Nonsense Club, which dined together on Thursdays, and of which Colman and Lloyd were members. It is evident that he lived in a more or less literary atmosphere, and we know that he kept up his classical studies, wrote occasional verses and some popular ballads, and contributed to the reviews as well as to translations of Horace and the "Henriade." Of this last, his great friend Joseph Hill says, in an unpublished letter to Hayley, preserved at Yaxham with Cowper's letters to Hill, that it was the only large work that he was engaged in during these years, and that he was induced to undertake it by his brother, John Cowper, "for a very small reward." Hill adds that he believes the part translated by William Cowper was the second and fourth books. Through Lloyd, Cowper must at this time have often heard of Churchill, of whose work he spoke with such admiration in later years. But though his first volume shows more of Churchill's influence than that of any one else, it does not

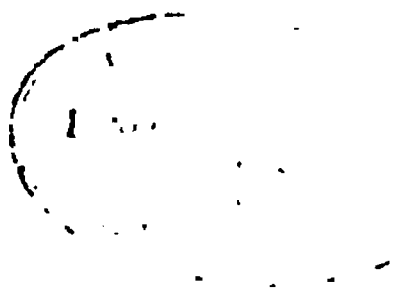
* This suggestion has the support of Southey, Bell, and Cowper's most recent editor, Mr. Thomas Wright (*Correspondence of William Cowper*, i. 14). But I think few careful readers of the letter to Rowley will share it. Such phrases as "modestia et (quod mirum videtur in fœminâ) taciturnitate est maximâ; quando autem loquitur, crederes Musam loqui," are the language of the Latin exercise writer, not of the lover.

appear that the two men were ever friends. Indeed their very different characters would have made even acquaintance difficult.

What this way of life would have led him to no one can now say. But the sad and abrupt end to which it actually came is well known. It was about to reach the conclusion natural in that day to a young man of Cowper's connections and ability, when the catastrophe occurred. His cousin, Major Cowper, had the right of nominating to a valuable clerkship in the House of Lords, and, in 1763, he nominated the poet. The result was the crisis of Cowper's life. He had been subject to deep depression from the time he first went to live alone in the Temple. It is difficult now to be sure of the exact nature of this melancholy, Cowper's own account of it being coloured by the religious ideas with which he emerged from the attack. He says that George Herbert's poems, by the "strain of piety" he found in them, alone alleviated his misery. But, whatever the actual nature of the illness was, by 1763 his mind was in a state unfit to bear any excitement, and the prospect of appearing before the House of Lords so completely overwhelmed him that he several times attempted suicide, and the whole scheme was abandoned. Nothing shows more painfully how deeply rooted the disease was than his own account, written later, in which he is still plainly incapable of distinguishing between what really occurred and what was merely the hallucination of his disordered brain. His disease at once took the form, which it unhappily retained whenever it recurred, of a conviction of his being eternally lost, by a special decree, in punishment of some wickedness. He was soon removed to a private asylum at St. Albans, where he spent eighteen months. In the end the intense religious gloom was succeeded by an equally vivid religious joy, and, when he left the asylum in June 1765, religion had become for him what it remained ever afterwards, alike in happiness and unhappiness, madness and health, the greatest interest of his life. His brother, a Fellow of a Cambridge College, settled him at Huntingdon. He resigned a commissionership of bankruptcy he had held, and his relations subscribed to provide him with an income. But it is evident that his inaptitude for managing his affairs was bringing him towards bankruptcy, and, what was more serious, his solitude reproducing the old melancholy, when he made the happy acquaintance of the Unwin family, whose name he has immortalized.

Mr. Unwin was a clergyman who had resigned his living and settled, with his wife, son, and daughter, at Huntingdon, where he received pupils. In November, 1765, Cowper went to live with them, and he and Mrs. Unwin were scarcely ever afterwards under different roofs. Complete religious sympathy was one of the links that united him to his new friends, and the little circle was unbroken till July, 1767, when Mr. Unwin died. There seems to have been no thought of a separation between Mrs. Unwin and Cowper:

COWPER'S HORSE AND DOG
FROM AN OIL PAINTING BY MARGARISON



indeed it appears that Mr. Unwin had expressed a wish to his wife that Cowper should remain in her house. The authority for this statement is the Rev. Josiah Bull, who, in his *John Newton, an Autobiography and a Narrative*, says that he takes it from the sketch of the poet's life which Newton began and left unfinished. At any rate, the widow and the poet remained together, and it is now known that the somewhat strange position they occupied in the eyes of the world, causing some gossip at the time and some surprise since, was to have been brought to an end by a marriage which was on the point of taking place when Cowper's second attack of insanity occurred. Mr. Bull says that his grandfather, William Bull, the poet's friend, had it from Mrs. Unwin herself that she and Cowper were at that time on the point of being married, and adds that Newton had mentioned the engagement in his unfinished memoir, and said it was well known to their friends. This alone would satisfy most people that Southey had been in some way strangely misled when he allowed himself to deny the engagement and say he was "enabled to assert" that nothing of the kind was either known or suspected by Newton. But I am in a position to give more conclusive proof. The Rev. Samuel Greatheed was a neighbour and friend of the poet, and, after his death, preached a funeral sermon, which was published, and dedicated to Lady Hesketh. He was, therefore, in a position to know the facts, and, in an unpublished letter addressed to John Johnson, the poet's cousin, in whose house he died, he says, referring to Johnson's life of Cowper, "Your account of his life was greatly wanted, and appears to be very well executed. I only wished, for the advantage of Cowper's moral character, that it had mentioned his matrimonial engagement to Mrs. Unwin: but this, I suppose, you were not at liberty to insert." * This evidence is final, as it shows that among those who were nearest to Cowper there was no doubt whatever as to the fact, but only as to the propriety of mentioning it. It seems to have been withheld deliberately, even details pointing to it being struck out. For instance, in the letter to Newton of December 1, 1789, Cowper used the words, "If you have not heard from myself, you have heard from *my better self*, Mrs. Unwin." The words in italics were omitted when Johnson published the letter in the *Private Correspondence*, and they are printed here for the first time. The object of the concealment appears to have been to spare the feelings of Theodora Cowper, who, as Lady

* Greatheed, who is often alluded to in Cowper's letters (e.g., June 4, 1785), mentions the intended marriage in his *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of William Cowper, Esq.*, 1814, adding (p. 30) that "the time for accomplishing their union was fixed" when the attack of 1773 occurred. He declares that "Cowper repeatedly said that if he ever again entered a Church it would, in the first place, be to marry Mrs. Unwin." This is, of course, conclusive as to Greatheed's own belief: the importance of the letter to Johnson lies in its proving that this belief, or rather knowledge, was shared by all Cowper's friends.

Hesketh knew, had not only never forgotten her love of the poet, but had thought of him as feeling much more than a cousin's affection for her to the end. Of this I have come across a curious proof. A year after Cowper's death, on July 6, 1801, Hayley, writing to John Johnson, sends him a copy of "a very interesting mysterious poem, supposed by the tender Theodora to be written by our beloved Bard, and intended for her *private intelligence* as addressed to *herself*." The verses appeared in the *St. James' Chronicle*, "addressed to a friend and relation," in June 1798. I give them here as a curiosity, though Hayley was probably right in deciding they were not the work of Cowper.

*"O Thou who bad'st the Muse forget her fear,
When rude at first the untutored numbers fell;
Whose praise, like sweet notes on the ravish'd ear,
First taught her heart with hope of praise to swell,
Say can she e'er forget thy dearer praise to tell!
Nor time, nor absence sway the constant mind:
Nor wounds impressed by sorrow weaken love;
Such peaceful love as nature's hand has twined,
Which first the gentle mother bids us prove,
Which from our breasts the fates shall last remove!"*

*"O could I reach the sweet Horatian strain,
In whose free verse Mæcenas still shall live,
To tongues unborn thy honours should remain,
In other worlds and other tongues survive:
In vain her shadowy arms oblivion fling,
And time still urge the never-flagging wing.
Think not the poet's bonds like mine to thee!
By dearer ties our kindred minds agree,
Nor was his friend to him what thou art still to me."*

Theodora Cowper's heart was greater than her critical judgment. Still, the closing lines are, as Hayley says, much in Cowper's manner, and the improbability of the piece being his lies not so much in the style as in the fact of there being no evidence in his letters to Lady Hesketh that he ever thought of Theodora, or dreamed she thought of him, at this time. Anyhow, it is touching to think of her sending her anonymous gifts through Lady Hesketh to the unforgotten lover of her youth, and fancying she read his anonymous reply when she took up her *St. James' Chronicle*! But it is obvious that, so long as she lived, Lady Hesketh, and those whom Lady Hesketh had influenced, would wish to spare her the knowledge that Cowper had even contemplated marriage with another woman.

But to return to the year 1767. A few months after Mr. Unwin

died, Cowper and his widow left Huntingdon, and settled at Olney in Buckinghamshire, taking the house in which they were to live for more than twenty years. It has lately been bought by Mr. Collingridge, who has generously presented it to the town, to be maintained as it is in memory of its having been the home of Cowper. The attraction which took them there was the curate of the parish, who inhabited the vicarage in the absence of the vicar. In no profession, I suppose, are there so few men with an adventurous or eccentric past as among the clergy of the Church of England; and the Rev. John Newton, who, from being captain of a slave-ship, had become one of the leading Evangelical clergy, would have been a remarkable man anywhere. Cowper and Mrs. Unwin only made his acquaintance after Mr. Unwin's death, but the friendship grew so rapidly that they chose their house largely because its garden communicated with that of the vicarage. In the next few years they were rarely many hours apart. Mr. Newton, with the best intentions and the worst result, induced Cowper to take a public part in his prayer-meetings, to visit among his parishioners and discuss their religious experiences, and to write hymns. For some years this highly charged atmosphere was the only one the poet had any opportunity, or indeed desire, of breathing. Mrs. Unwin's son and daughter had married and removed; Cowper's brother had died, and with his other relations the receipt of his allowance became almost his only link. He had sold his books on leaving the St. Alban's asylum. The result was the inevitable one in such a case as his. With a society limited to two persons one of whom was extremely busy, and with all his interests and occupations confined to one subject, he was thrown back upon himself in fatal introspection, the old sad delusions returned, as some of the hymns are there to show, and, by January, 1773, he was once more definitely insane. He insisted on remaining in Mr. Newton's house, where Mrs. Unwin, nobly scorning evil tongues, and disregarding Cowper's fancy that she hated him, was his constant attendant by day and by night. He was a prey to the most awful despair, and again attempted suicide. In May, 1774, the change at last came, and he went back to his own house. He amused himself with gardening and with the hares he has made famous; but the central delusion remained fixed, and was fatal to more social and intellectual occupations. It was not till November, 1776, that he resumed communication with the most faithful of his old friends, Joseph Hill, with whom he had once read Tasso, and who now helped him back to his literary tastes, so that six months later we find him reading Gray, and calling him "the only poet since Shakespeare entitled to the character of sublime"—a very curious statement in view of the intimate knowledge of Milton shown everywhere in his poetry. Mr. Newton would have had him write some more hymns, but his delusions about his spiritual condition made

him think this out of the question. The "Olney Hymns" were published in 1779, and had a large sale. The letter "C" was affixed to those written by Cowper, and Newton's Preface mentioned his co-operation. Its publication was almost immediately followed by Mr. Newton's departure from Olney, to become Rector of St. Mary Woolnoth, in the City of London. There is no doubt that, in an age of idle or absentee clergymen, he had put himself to heroic labours for the good of his parishioners; but men of his iron temperament are always slow to understand that what is life to them may be death to weaker natures. He himself records that one result of his sermons was that ("near a dozen truly gracious people" had become "disordered in their heads") and I, at least, cannot doubt that his departure was a great gain to Cowper, the man and the invalid, and that it, and (it alone, made possible the appearance of Cowper the poet.)

The Reverend Josiah Bull, in his autobiography of Newton, and in some articles contributed to the *Sunday at Home* in 1866, has defended Newton's management of Cowper, and argued that it was not the cause of the catastrophe of the year 1778. But though he gives us some interesting information, such as that the central hallucination which afflicted Cowper for the rest of his life was a persuasion that he had received the Divine command to destroy himself, and was excluded from mercy for his disobedience, he will not convince most people of Newton's wisdom. It is true that before Cowper ever saw Newton he was already, as may be seen from a letter of October 20, 1766, living a life in which religion excluded all other interests, and religious exercises all other occupations; and it is true that all accounts show the years from 1765 to 1772 to have been happy ones. But that does not prove that Newton used wisely the immense influence he possessed over Cowper between 1767 and his departure from Olney in 1779. No one, it is to be remembered, accuses Newton of anything worse than want of judgment, and narrowness of sympathy. The proof of that exists, not only in Cowper's hand, in a well-known letter rejecting his interference in the matter of the friendship with the Throckmortons, but in the letters of Newton himself. I have had before me some which he wrote to John Johnson in the last years of Cowper's life. And they afford the most conclusive proof of his blindness to the facts. If over thirty years' of experience of Cowper taught him so little that he could write, in December 1798, as he does, "I have but little expectation, that he will so far recover as to appear much in public in his former character during the first seven years of his residence at Olney, when he was indeed a burning and a shining light," it is not difficult to be sure how complete his misunderstanding of what was possible and desirable in 1770 must have been. And when we see him so entirely without eyes for any activities or interests but those of his own religious party,

we do not feel obliged to think he gives us the whole truth when he says, in another of these letters : " For six or seven years after he (Cowper) left St. Albans he seemed to live a life of heaven upon earth," or " I believe he never had a comfortable hour since New Year's Day 1773, the last day of his attendance upon public worship." Such a man is sure to have exaggerated both the early happiness and the later unhappiness. With the innocent pleasures which brightened Cowper's later life he had less than no sympathy : " Nothing surprises or indeed grieves me more," he writes to Johnson on November 28, 1795, " than what you intimate of his attachment to novels. *O quam dispar sibi !*" Things, he adds, were very different in the years when they were together at Olney, but after his " removal to Weston and other concurrent circumstances," he " associated with gay people, wore a green coat, and became an archer. He gave in to many things of which I once thought him incapable, and of which I doubt not he would have been incapable to this day had he continued in his right mind." It is scarcely worth while to go beyond this last startling statement, unless it be to add that he immediately says of the Homer translation : " I know the time when he would no more have attempted it than he would to translate the history of Jack the Giant Killer into Greek." Such a man, with such views of life and literature, could never have helped Cowper to become the happy human being and successful poet he became after 1780, and it was a good day for his friend and for us when he became Rector of St. Mary Woolnoth, and left Olney.

Few are the poets who reach fifty before their first volume sees the light, and fewer still those who, coming so late into the arena, carry off the prize. Cowper was born in 1731, and putting aside his share in some translations and his contribution to the " Olney Hymns," he published nothing till his first volume appeared in 1782. On his recovery, gardening, sketching, walking and reading had been his amusements. To these, writing verses gradually began to be added, and he soon found that the exercise it gave his mind was the best of all antidotes to his melancholy. After he had composed a few trifles, Mrs. Unwin urged him to attempt something more considerable, and suggested it should be a moral satire, and be called " The Progress of Error." It appears from an expression used by Cowper in a letter to Newton, December 21, 1780, that her enthusiasm did not carry her very far, and that she was soon alarmed at the success of her own advice. But she had discovered for the poet, not only the work of his life, but the best antidote to his melancholy, and he would not be deprived of it. Mr. Newton, on being informed, did not disapprove, though he was more concerned that the morality should be edifying than that the satire should be brilliant. He was consulted throughout, arranged with Johnson the bookseller for the publication, and proposed a good many corrections and excisions, nearly all, if not all, of which,

as well as some made by the bookseller, were accepted by the modesty of the poet. Mr. Newton also wrote a preface, but it was not then printed, as Johnson thought it would frighten away readers who were not of Newton's religious school.

The book was fairly well received. A few discerning critics saw that the new poet was indeed a new poet, with a mind and a manner of his own; and that was all that could be expected. It was not the kind of volume that could have a wide circulation, and it brought Cowper neither money, nor friends, nor fame. But, as he himself says, "once an author, always an author," and two of his most famous productions were written, and a third—his greatest—begun, before another year was over. Neither the pride of authorship, however, nor the experience of its practical advantages in his particular case, can have the chief credit of this year of fertility. That belongs to a woman. Some time in the summer of 1781, when the negotiations about his first volume were going on, the happy accident which brought Lady Austen to Olney gave Cowper just that more genial inspiration which Mrs. Unwin could not supply, and gave Lady Austen a place in literary history which she cannot lose so long as there are readers of the "Task," "John Gilpin," and the "Royal George."

Lady Austen came to Olney, or rather to the charming village of Clifton on the hill above the town, on a visit to her sister, who was the wife of the clergyman there. Cowper saw her when the two ladies called on Mrs. Unwin, in June or July, 1781, was at once taken with her, asked Mrs. Unwin to invite her to tea, and was soon on such intimate terms as to give her the name of "Sister Ann." To his returning mental energy her arrival in Olney was evidently a miracle of good fortune. "A person that has seen much of the world, and understands it well, has high spirits, a lively fancy, and great readiness of conversation, introduces a sprightliness into such a scene as this, which, if it was peaceful before, is not the worse for being a little enlivened." So the poet himself described the new arrival to William Unwin, and it meant even more to him than he realized. In fact, it was the beginning of a new era of his life. For the sixteen years that had passed since he left St. Albans he had lived in the most complete seclusion, entirely cut off from all social and intellectual life outside what was to be found in the very narrow circle of Newton and the Unwins. It was never to be so again. No one who loves Cowper can ever speak with anything but gratitude and affection of Mrs. Unwin. She gave her life to him. For thirty years she was the staff on which he leaned, and her tender care never failed him till she had ceased to be able to care even for herself. What she could do she did from first to last, but the thing wanted to be done now was to lift Cowper out of this limited provincial atmosphere, out of Olney, out of himself. That she could not do. She could not show him how to look beyond

the horizon of Olney and its little religious world, because she did not look beyond it herself; she could not take him out of himself, because it was in her company that he had come to be what he was. To call him back to himself as he was in the best of the days before the catastrophe, to call him forward to what he might be and was to be in the future, required some one who had some knowledge of the old world he had lived in, and some conception of what might be expected of such a mind as his. Above all, he needed livelier company to give him back the spirits on which all depended. And, happily, he was never again altogether without it till the final cloud settled on him which extinguished his reason and his life. His whole acquaintance with Lady Austen did not extend beyond three years at the most. But during that short time she had stimulated his mind, renewed his sense of the pleasures of social life, and victoriously charmed away his occasional fits of depression. The result was that before she left "John Gilpin" was printed, and the "Royal George" and the "Task" written. The mystery which led to their parting has never been cleared up. They had one quarrel in the spring of 1782, but a reconciliation followed, and the final breach did not occur till the spring of 1784. From Cowper's own account she seems to have been a somewhat exacting Muse, and when he had got interested in the "Task" he may have let her see that he grew weary of being left so rarely free to work at it. And Hayley's explanation that Mrs. Unwin felt some jealousy of the brilliant rival seems, in spite of Southey, to have so much probability in it that it is difficult not to accept it as at least partially true. The story of two women and one man is a very old one, and it is not the less likely to have its usual ending where one of the two, and that one in the unique position we now know to have been that of Mrs. Unwin, is much older than the other, and the younger exacts and obtains a great deal of attention.* And, no doubt, the vulgar gossip which speculated on the relations between Cowper and Mrs. Unwin was not rendered less active by the arrival of Lady Austen. In any case, Lady Austen disappeared from the world of the poet, to whom she had been so much, and Cowper plainly says that the fault was hers. But she did not leave him to the solitude in which she found him. Not long after Lady Austen took her final departure, Cowper became acquainted with a Roman Catholic family, the Throckmortons, who owned the neighbouring estate of Weston Underwood. Their descendants owned it till a year or so ago, and one may still trace all the details, introduced by the poet into the "Task," of his walks in Weston Park and gardens. The Wilderness, the temple, the monument to Fop, the avenue of limes, the Alcove, the Shrubbery, the Rustic Bridge, and the rest of his beloved haunts

* For a startling proof of how far Cowper carried his attentions to Lady Austen, see the remarkable lines on p. 501.

are there to-day,* and those who cherish his memory can haunt them still. I doubt if any single square mile in England—not forgetting Rydal or Grasmere—has received as much detailed poetic illustration as that of which Weston Park is the central point. Those who visit it may trace the poet's steps at every turn, especially if they can call in the assistance of the excellent map of his walks published by Mr. Wright in his useful little book, *The Town of Cowper*, or of the delightful old volumes, with the plates of a hundred years ago, called *The Rural Walks of Cowper*, and *Cowper Illustrated by a Series of Views*.

The second volume, containing the "Task," appeared in the summer of 1785. "John Gilpin," printed anonymously in a newspaper in 1784, and made famous early in 1785 by the recitations of Henderson, the actor, was now printed in the new volume, with the poet's name. The vogue of the ballad had been so immense, and with just the people Cowper was otherwise least likely to reach, that it must have very much helped the sale of the volume in which it now appeared. The London world which had given Henderson and Sheridan a profit of eight hundred pounds on their recitations, and had been so eager to obtain the print of John as he passed the Edmonton Bell that one dealer alone sold six thousand, was sure to provide curiosity enough to ensure the success of any volume by the same author. In fact, the edition was quickly exhausted, and next year the volume was reprinted, this time as the second of two volumes of *Poems of William Cowper, Esq., of the Inner Temple*, the earlier volume being now issued with it.

Of the literary importance of the "Task" and the "Poems," I shall speak presently. The immediate point is their effect on Cowper and on his life. Within a short time after their publication his name, till then hardly known outside the limits of an obscure country town, except by a few fast-fading memories, was become one of the very first in the nation to those who took any interest in English letters; the very first, indeed, in poetry at that moment, for Crabbe's long silence had just begun, and no volume of verse published between his "Newspaper," which preceded the "Task" by some months, and the "Lyrical Ballads" of 1798, can be compared for an instant with Cowper's great poem. He was read abroad as well as at home, having sixty readers at the Hague alone; and his reputation was such that when, only two or three years later, he decided to publish his translation of Homer by subscription, his friends had little difficulty in obtaining nearly five hundred subscribers. Pope himself had only had six hundred. But what Cowper valued more than any new fame his book brought him, was the old friends it gave back to him. The first of these was his cousin, Lady Hesketh. Nearest to him, except one, of all

the happy circle of his London days, she was now once more to take her place in his life, never again to resign it. It is still the second place, not the first. No rival ever came between Cowper and Mrs. Unwin; but from this time onwards, till the final removal to Norfolk, Lady Hesketh was never many months without seeing him, or many weeks without writing to him. Whether she had seen his first volume or not is uncertain; if so, she had perhaps concluded that he was still in a state in which correspondence could only consist of sermons on the one side and vain attempts on the other to go back to lighter matters once enjoyed in common. But when she had read "Gilpin," she knew that the cousin of her youth was alive again. She wrote at once, and he replied that very day: "This is just as it should be: we are all grown young again." In a second letter she placed her purse at his disposal, and he at once said that, though he had refused those of others, he would not refuse hers. With her came back a renewal of friendly intercourse with others of his relations, and "Unwins and Unwinisms," as he called the acquaintances he had made in the twenty years since 1765, were to be his exclusive society no more. An anonymous friend, through Lady Hesketh (it was probably Theodora Cowper), sent him frequent presents, and promised an annuity of fifty pounds; his uncle offered to come and see him, and Lady Hesketh came. She was settled in Olney Vicarage by June, 1786, and before she had been there many days had arranged for Cowper and Mrs. Unwin to give up their rather cheerless house in Olney, and take one offered them by the Throckmortons at Weston. The new house was an improvement in every way; a better house, a better garden, pleasanter company, and, above all, Weston park and gardens at their own gate, instead of separated from them by a mile or two of winter mud. Of course, the Throckmorton friendship rapidly grew under the new circumstances: and by the help of Lady Hesketh's carriage and the fame of the author of the "Task," they made some pleasant acquaintances in the country round. Lady Hesketh and Mrs. Unwin got on admirably from the first, though not quite, it must be admitted, to the last; for there came a day when Mrs. Unwin's health failed, and with it sometimes Lady Hesketh's patience, so that we find her writing of the poor old lady rather bitterly as "the Enchantress." * But that was not yet; and for the present, with his new friends, his new house, and the new book he had undertaken, Cowper was busier and happier than he had ever been since the catastrophe of 1763. The work he was engaged in was the translation of Homer, which grew out of an early dislike for the artificiality of Pope. He began it a week after he finished the last poem of his second volume, and set himself the task of forty lines a day. According to Hayley,† the original

* See *Letters of Lady Hesketh concerning William Cowper*, 1901.

† *Life*, i. 411, 1803 edition.

suggestion here also came from Lady Austen, who, when Cowper read Pope to her and grumbled at him, asked why he should not himself make the simpler version he clamoured for. If so, her inspiration was hardly so happy in this case as when she set him to work on the "Task." But, no doubt, the mechanical labour of translating was exactly the thing to keep nightmares at bay. The translation, and the business of revising and correcting it, was his main occupation till its appearance in the summer of 1791: and, indeed, he can hardly be said to have ever again laid Homer aside; for the first edition was hardly out when he began a revision for the second, and he worked at a final revision even during the sad Norfolk period at the end. The blessing of translations is to the translator; and it is impossible for Cowper's readers not to regret these long years, his best, lost for the purposes of original work. But he himself says (January 8, 1787) that it was only after waiting a year, in a condition in which writing was a necessity to him, and finding no subject for original verse, that he turned to the task of translating Homer. And Homer at least gave the poet in him some chance. Milton, who followed next, only asked translation in the case of his Latin and Italian poems; for the rest, Cowper's task was that of an editor. Johnson had planned a Milton to rival Boydell's Shakespeare: plates by Fuseli and notes by Cowper. But Cowper got no good of it except the friendship of Hayley, the poet, who afterwards wrote his life. His important literary work was, in fact, done by 1785, when the "Task" was published. Nothing written after that, except a very few occasional pieces, has any bearing on his poetical position to-day. (It was with Cowper, as with most poets; his work was done when he began to enjoy the honour of it.)

The fifteen years he had still to live when the "Task" appeared were divided into two halves, the happiest and the saddest periods of his life. During the first (with the exception of the first six months of 1787, during which he was insane) he might seem to have got together most of the ingredients whose mixture makes the sweetest cup of happiness middle-aged bachelors can hope to taste. His health and fortune were as good as anybody has a right to expect; and he took them, after the fashion of the wise and happy, as part of the established order of things. The daily domesticities, that are only second in importance to good health and good temper in their effect on happiness, were made delightful to him by the never-broken harmony of his union with Mrs. Unwin. He had a host of friends, new and old, appearing and reappearing from all directions, and loading him not only with their love, which is best, but with their admiration, which, though only second-best, will never be a small part of happiness to any one, and most certainly not to a poet. Then, besides health and wealth, friends to his mind, and, I might almost say, wife to his heart, he had a house and garden which were exactly what he wanted, and where he wanted.

And, best of all, perhaps, he was constantly busy, and his business was of that kind, the most agreeable of all, which brings to him who does it not only credit from outside but pleasure within. What can a man want more? we may ask; and answer, perhaps, Nothing, except some children to carry him on into the future. But it was not the lack of children that spoilt the thought of the future for Cowper. His awful delusion was always in the background to blacken that picture for him. Still, it seems it was not often anywhere except in the background: and probably few discovered it who were not standing very close. For weeks or months no sign of it appeared except his obstinate refusal to enter a church or even to join in the devotional exercises of his own household. Such a conviction to such a man could not but be a large drawback to the completest round of happiness; but all the evidence points to long periods of latency, leaving free play to his great natural gift of enjoyment; and in spite of an attack of insanity in 1787; this was his common condition from 1785 to 1792 or 1793; as a whole, few happier men were to be found.

There are very few eighteenth-century interiors with which we are more intimately acquainted than that of Weston Lodge during these smiling years of industry, prosperity, and peace. The best picture of it, or rather the best hundred pictures of it, are, of course, to be found in his own letters, some of the most charming letters dating from this time. But for those who love to know the little daily ways of great men, it may be worth adding a few details from unpublished sources. About what he ate I do not know that there is much to say, except that he was fond of fish; and nearly all the letters to Hill, and many to the Newtons, contain messages of thanks for fish often suppressed in the printed text. Of what he drank we know more. Like Gibbon, and unlike Johnson, he was a believer in wine. "If such be the consequences of water-drinking," he writes to Hill of his friend Chester's visit to Harrogate in 1788, "let us abstain from all such perilous beverages, and drink wine." Another of the hitherto unpublished letters to Hill gives us the detail that he found it most convenient to import his wine by the hogshead from Lynn rather than by the hamper from London. What the wine was I do not know, except that it was sometimes the Madeira beloved by Gibbon, and that on one occasion, of which I have seen a detailed description, the two bottles on the table at the afternoon dessert were of port and of calcavella. A young cousin of Cowper's, one John Johnson, grandson of his uncle Roger Donne, came over to see him from Cambridge about this time—to be exact, in January, 1790,—soon became a frequent and very welcome guest at the Lodge, and played a large part in the rest of Cowper's life. Among the Cowper papers of all sorts he left behind him, there are two manuscripts of his own, which are descriptions in verse of his first day at the Lodge, and of the first time he saw Teedon, the

foolish schoolmaster of Olney, a visitor there. It is the second of these which gives us this little detail of the wines. Teedon finds them at dessert on a Saturday afternoon.

*“ O’er choicest fruits and wine in social chat
Thyself, thy Mary, and thy kinsman sat.”*

And Cowper soon asks him—

*“ Good Mr. Teedon, which shall pass,
Port wine or calcavella to thy glass ? ”*

Teedon takes port, and asks, as most of us will to-day, what calcavella is ; on which Cowper derives the name “with fear” from “qualchevalle.” The fear was wiser than the derivation, it seems ; for the wine is really a white Portuguese wine, and takes its name from the town Carcavelhos. But Teedon knew no Italian, and cheerfully added a glass of “qualchevalle” to his port. So much for Cowper in the poetical rôle of a wine-bibber, to which it is regrettable to admit that he added the prosaic character of a drinker of gin. In the printed letters there is, now and then, an indication of a taste for the best Holland gin ; and the unprinted indications of it are more numerous ; one may be quoted : it is the omitted opening of the letter to Johnson of April 11, 1793 :—

“ MY DEAREST JOHNNY,

“ In the first place, as a most important article, which I would not willingly forget, I wish you to send us another keg of Geneva, that excellent liquor of which we both take a tablespoonful every day after dinner. This laudable practice, together with the gift of a bottle to the Courtenays, has pretty much reduced our quantity, so that we are in danger of being left ginless unless soon supplied.”

There are also demands for white brandy. So that it is plain that neither Cowper nor Mrs. Unwin made room for total abstinence in their creed. Truth must add that both took snuff. John Johnson was not a great poet, but he is a witness to whose evidence there is no reply : and the first of these sketches tells us of the walk he took with Cowper, and paints for us the poet sitting in the Weston alcove, setting his watch by Olney church clock with the assistance of a “traveller glass,” enjoying the scenery, and also enjoying the contents of a—

*“ Silver storehouse filled
With Caledonian grain that thrilled and thrilled
Thy nerve olfactory : ”*

and when they get home they find Mrs. Unwin sitting in her chair, and, on the table by her side, “a box of silver with a pungent store.”

The fact is, of course, that Cowper, in matters of this sort, retained the habits of the world in which he was brought up. Indeed, neither the poet nor the evangelical in him ever extinguished the gentleman. When he writes for a hat it is to be a "smart, well-cocked, fashionable affair." Hill's sisters are requested, on January 12, 1771, "now the streets are clean and frozen," to buy him some very specially described handkerchiefs and muslin ruffles; and he allowed himself to be painted by Abbott in the costume of an archery club. Not to linger too long over these trifles, it may be added that Johnson's account of the start for his daily walk suggests a carefully prepared business, quite as far removed from the sloven as from the fop. The youth had been carried off by Mrs. Unwin soon after his arrival, so as to leave the poet to his Homer; but after a while the moment comes, and—

*"Thy walking shoes thy valet bore
And what were buskins termed in days of yore :"*

and the hat, and the gloves, and the wig, are set out by the same functionary, as well as—

*"Thy brown surtout, with velvet collar matched,
And, though a poet's garment, nowhere patched ;"*

and so they go off with his dog, Beau, leading the way.

One other item, and one only, from this source. A poet's workshop must always have some interest for those who read his works. This is what Johnson saw in Cowper's study. First, Mrs. Unwin in a chair, the poet's linnets in a cage, and two cats on the floor. Then, on the walls were two landscapes by Vernet, and two by Rubens, and some engravings illustrating Homer, between which was one of Homer himself. All the pictures are minutely described. Some of them are also to be found in a detailed description of the parlour at Olney, which occurs in an unpublished letter of a Mr. Kilvington, written to John Johnson in 1810, on behalf of Mrs. Powley, daughter of Mrs. Unwin. But the Olney account mentions prints of Bunyan and Thurlow and a Crucifixion, none of which occurs in this description of Weston. A poet's books are, however, more than his pictures; and we are rather surprised to find from Johnson's account that he who once described his library as—

*"No mighty store,
My own works neatly bound and nothing more,"*

has in fact a good small collection of books. The works of Horace stand side by side with his own in the chiffonier: and we are told that not only "Latium," but Greece, France, and Caledonia contributed their poets, and even "the new world attuned her infant

lyre," in Cowper's library. Who was this American genius, one wonders? There were English poets, too, of course; and among prose works, we hear of Johnson's *Rambler*, Addison, Burke, Gibbon, and Junius. Altogether a respectable, if modest, collection.

But it is time to go back to our story. This happy season was not to last for ever. The beginning of the change came at the end of 1791, when Mrs. Unwin had a slight fit, which was followed by a paralytic stroke in the following spring. Hayley was happily with Cowper at the time of the second attack, and threw all his ardent kindness into the work of helping and comforting his new friend. The acquaintance had grown out of the fact that they were both engaged on Milton, and it ripened so fast that, in the second letter he wrote to Hayley, Cowper is already exclaiming "*Utrumque nostrum incredibili modo Consentit astrum:*" and it was not three months from the beginning of their correspondence before Hayley was at Weston; or, what was much more astonishing, five months before Cowper and Mrs. Unwin were Hayley's guests in Sussex. We may sometimes smile at Hayley's unrestrained enthusiasms, and rather fussy and unpractical activities; but the new friend proved a very true one, and every lover of Cowper has a kindly feeling for him. It is to him we owe by far the most striking of the Cowper portraits—that by Romney. It was, at least in part, to his unwearying efforts that Cowper owed the pension of £300 a year which was granted to him in the spring of 1794. But by that time he was not even in a condition to open the letter from Lord Spencer which announced it; and it had to be made payable to his friend Samuel Rose as his trustee. The mere knowledge of the illness of Mrs. Unwin, who had grown steadily worse, would in itself have been a great trial to him: but the form it took made it more than that. She who had been the support and comfort of his life became its daily burden. From thinking only of him, she thought only of herself, and exacted attentions from him to which neither his mental nor bodily strength was equal. He responded as nobly to her need as she had to his: no word of complaint escaped him, and he would refuse her nothing she asked; but he paid for his devotion with his reason, and perhaps his life.

A peculiarly sad feature of these last years was the intimate connection that gradually grew up between the poet and the Olney schoolmaster Teedon, already alluded to. Mr. Wright, to whose industry lovers of Cowper owe so much, has, with a lack of judgment absolutely amazing, spoken of this person as the greatest influence in Cowper's life.* The fact is, of course, that, on the Cowper who lives, he had no influence whatever. While Cowper was well in body and sane in mind, he laughed at Teedon. When his health was gone and his mind going, he grew to think of

* See his *Life of Cowper*, pp. 14, 377.

the foolish creature as an oracle. That fancy was simply part of his disease, and has no other importance. The record of Cowper's relations with Teedon is, in fact, of interest only from the point of view of the study of pathology. Mr. Wright, who talks of "the famous Teedon's Diary," rejoices that he has been able to print seventy-three letters to Teedon in his edition of Cowper's letters. It would be almost as reasonable to rejoice over printing, if we had them to print, all the crazy utterances which must have fallen from the poet's lips every day during his attacks of insanity. Teedon had the kindest intentions, but it is evident his head was turned by the vanity of becoming a kind of spiritual director to such a man as Cowper. For several years he and the poet exchanged a frequent correspondence, communicating to each other the "notices," as they called them, which they imagined themselves to receive, and fancied to be of Divine origin. Of course Teedon's notices were mainly or entirely of the encouraging sort; but the benefit Cowper could receive from these unfulfilled predictions was trifling, while the injury done by his finding a correspondent with whom he could dwell on the features of his disease is beyond calculation. The only people who could really help him were the cheerful friends, Lady Hesketh, and Hayley, and Johnson, and the rest, who kept his mind, as far as might be, away from the delusions altogether. Nothing could have been worse for him than to obtain a correspondent to whom he could write such miserable ravings as "I waked, saying, 'I shall perish;' which was immediately answered by a vision of a wine-glass and these words, 'a whole glass.'" And such things are the staple of the Teedon correspondence which, though generally sober and natural in form, is almost entirely insane in substance. Meanwhile of Teedon himself it is only necessary to add that, in addition to the passages which Southey and even Mr. Wright himself have quoted to prove the opinion held of him by Cowper in his happier days, there is an unpublished passage in the letter to Hill, of June 29, 1785, which is even more conclusive than they. It is the letter which begins, "I write in a nook that I call my Bouderie" (not *Boudoir*, as printed in all the editions); and the passage is amusing enough to be worth quoting. He is praising the *Bouderie*, and says, "It is secure from all noise, and a refuge from all intrusion; for intrusions sometimes trouble me even at Olney. I have never lived, I believe it is impossible to live, where they can be altogether evaded. At Berkhamstead I was haunted by the younger Harcourt, in the Temple by T. White, Esq., at Weymouth by Mr. Foy, and at Olney I have a Mr. Teedon to dread, who in his single person includes the disagreeables of them all. He is the most obsequious, the most formal, the most pedantic of all creatures, so civil that it would be cruel to affront him, and so troublesome that it is impossible to bear him. Being possessed of a little Latin, he seldom uses a word that is not derived from that language, and, being a bigot to propriety of

pronunciation, studiously and constantly lays the accent upon the wrong syllable. I think that Sheridan would adore him. He has formed his style (he told me so himself) by the pattern that Mr. Hervey has furnished him with in his *Theron and Aspasio*; accordingly, he never says that my garden is gay, but that the flowery tribe are finely variegated and extremely fragrant. The weather with him is never fine, but genial; never cold and uncomfortable, but rigorous and frowning. If he cannot recollect a thing, he tells me that it is not within his recognizance, convincing me at the same time that the orthography of the word is quite familiar to him by laying a particular stress upon the *g*. In short, he surfeits me whenever I am so unhappy as to encounter him, which is too often my lot in the winter, but, thanks to my Bouderie, I can hide myself from him now. A poet's retreat is sacred."

When it is added that Lady Hesketh writes in the margin of this, "A most exact picture of the person in question," and that, in the verses already alluded to, which describe Johnson's first sight of him, he is throughout spoken of with goodnatured contempt, and Cowper is made to address him as "good Teedon," the real opinion held of him by the poet and his friends will be plain enough.

The Teedon letters extend over a period of two years and a half, from August, 1791, to June, 1794. I have seen the originals of all but two or three of the seventy-three Mr. Wright has printed, and his text appears to be generally, though not invariably, accurate. How far the catastrophe which brought the correspondence to an end was its direct or indirect result, no one can now say; but the unhappy fact is that in January, 1794, Cowper's madness returned, and of the remaining six years of his life we have only about a dozen letters, all of the most despondent sort. He would sit for days without uttering a word, and almost without touching food. No devotion of friends could comfort him; but what it could do, it did. Lady Hesketh, herself in indifferent health, was with him and Mrs. Unwin at Weston Lodge, from November, 1793, to the summer of 1795; Hayley paid them several visits; and John Johnson, the cousin already mentioned, of whom Cowper had grown very fond, and whose family still bear the poet's name, and own his portrait and some of his manuscripts, played an ever-increasing part in the sad work of looking after the unhappy couple. Since his first coming over from Cambridge in 1790, he had often stayed at Weston, had copied bits of Homer, and had secured subscribers at Cambridge for the translation. He now undertook to render a last heroic service, the only one that seemed to promise any hope for the unhappy poet. In July, 1795, he persuaded Cowper and Mrs. Unwin to come with him to Norfolk. Cowper was sunk in the profoundest despair, but he did not refuse to perform the journey when the day came, July 28th. It was intended to be only a visit, but they

*Scherzo -
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never returned to Weston. Mr. Johnson's unselfish affection spared no effort in the hope of Cowper's restoration; but, though he had his better days as well as his worse, nothing approaching health or happiness, or hope, ever came to him again. He and Mrs. Unwin both remained under the care of this most devoted of cousins till the end, which came to her in December, 1796, and to Cowper on April 25, 1800. Both are buried in the church of East Dereham, the quiet country town in which they died.

Before that little chapel, where he lies, had received the dust which makes it still a place of pilgrimage, greater masters had arisen, at whose mightier touch those very strings that had been pressed by Cowper's gentle fingers were already yielding richer and stronger music. His own publisher, Johnson, had issued two volumes for Wordsworth in 1793, and in 1798 a provincial publisher produced the little book in which a few keen eyes detected the future fame, not only of Wordsworth, but of Coleridge. And if even before Cowper died greater men than he were already occupying the poetic stage, the years that followed his death saw it more crowded than it has ever been in our history. The "Lay of the Last Minstrel" appeared in 1805, and "Marmion" in 1808; the first half of "Childe Harold" took England by storm in 1812; in 1818 Keats published "Endymion," and in 1819 Shelley published the "Prometheus Unbound." Never, perhaps, in our literary history have forty years seen so great a change. When Cowper sent the "Task" to London, he found the field open and empty, and at once received the prize which there was no rival to claim. Within twenty years of his death he was thrown irretrievably into the background by men of greater power, wider range, and profounder depth. Yet no one who really knows him has ever doubted for a moment the permanency of his place on the roll of our poets. (To read him is still, to-day as always, to feel one's self in the presence of one of the most delightful of human beings;

It is true that, when we come to go through his work in the order of its appearance, we see that this is an impression which could only grow up gradually. The stream of poetry is at first too thin to be easily recognized, and it is only after travelling some way with it, and watching it broaden out into the noble river of the "Task," that we can look back and trace its presence from the very beginning. His second volume is the key to his first; and, as to the peculiar charm of his personality, that could not be perfectly realized till the publication of his exquisite letters. But when we look back from our present vantage ground, all is there from the first, to be found by searching, imbedded even in the rather arid sermons of the volume of 1782. Still more easily is it to be found in the youthful pieces which were not printed till after his death, but now naturally come first in collections of his poems. The germ of the future poet, of himself and not another, of both his

strength and weakness, is visible almost at once. The very first piece, the verses written at Bath when he was only seventeen, shows already the love and imitation of Milton, the only poet he ever deliberately copied: there is the direct parody in the first few lines; and there is, in the second half of the piece, the hint of the manner seen afterwards in the weaker places of the "Task," that of a Milton come down from the heights, and not quite sure whether he has taken the tragic buskin off or not; there is the peculiar clumsiness of his later work, like a parody of Homer,—“the cobbler, leather-carving artist;” there is his own padding, to be excused in a verse-making boy, but less excusable in the author of the "Task," and there is also already his own excellent line—

“*Drags the dull load of disappointment on.*”

Travel a very little further, only to the verses which begin “Grant me the Muse.” He already knows himself to be poet, not of the “tall Parnassian cliff,” but of the “still Lethæan lake:” his Muse is one of quiet places, one whose “slow pinions brush the silent shore.” The lines to Richardson, again, anticipate the poet who was, like Richardson himself, always and everywhere a preacher. And the various pieces addressed to Delia, his only love poems, are the proof, in their solitariness, of his perfect sincerity, for they are addressed to his only love: and in their note, one not so much of passion as of a peculiarly intimate tenderness, are a foretaste of the lines to Mary and to his mother’s picture.

“*Oh ! then indulge thy grief, nor fear to tell
The gentle source from whence thy sorrows flow ;
Nor think it weakness when we love to feel,
Nor think it weakness what we feel to show.*”

Every line comes from the heart and goes to it. Cowper is nowhere more a poet than in the best of these pieces, and nowhere more himself. In the beautiful stanzas—

“*Bid adieu, my sad heart, bid adieu to thy peace !
Thy pleasure is past, and thy sorrows increase ;
See the shadows of evening how far they extend,
And a long night is coming, that never may end ;
For the sun is now set that enlivened the scene,
And an age must be past ere it rises again,*”

we already hear the pensive melancholy of the ‘Shrubbery,’ and we get even the very measure of that later and better-known farewell—

“*The poplars are felled ; farewell to the shade
And the whispering sound of the cool colonnade.*”

In another of these poems of his love we perhaps even get a first faint hint of the delusions which were afterwards to take such awful shape. But it is unnecessary to pursue these details further. The importance of the early poems lies in the proof they afford that the poetic vein in Cowper was part of the original man, and shows exactly the same colour in the young "wit" of the Temple as it did a quarter of a century later in the poetic recluse of Olney. His manner is his own from the first. Lover as he was of the Greek and Roman poets, it is absolutely uninfluenced by classical models. To Pope, still the ruling name in England, he never professed any allegiance; and though no one in that day could quite escape Pope's power, no one went so near escaping it as Cowper. Even so late as 1782, it was still an achievement, and one great enough to be itself proof of original power, to write moral satires that contain little or no trace of Pope. Cowper was a great admirer of Gray, the anti-Pope, as he has sometimes been made in our own day, and a few traces of him may be found once or twice in Cowper's work; but the ambitious and self-conscious style of Gray's odes is altogether alien to Cowper, who is always, at least in his short pieces, simple, tender, spontaneous. Probably no poet, in all the history of the art, did so little casting about for a subject. He just took what came. That is the secret of his rare sincerity; it is also, no doubt, the cause of his too frequent triviality. If he could have added something more of artistic seriousness to his spontaneity, he would have known that, though the highest poetry finds its origin in these suggestions from within that arise we know not how and seem to be a part of ourselves, yet not all such suggestions have poetic value; and many, which have, require very deliberate and conscious development before their value can be realized. But his was, all through, a talent that understood neither its limitations nor its possibilities.

Of the only other verse written by Cowper before the time of his first volume, little need be said. Hymns have rarely been literature, and Cowper's religious convictions were too definite and too narrow to allow him to handle his subject with the necessary freedom of an artist. A good many of the hymns which he contributed to the "Olney Hymns," issued by Newton in 1779, have remained in use, though till hymn-books give author's names and dates, as they all so easily could and should, most people will remain unaware that they are singing the verses of a great poet, when "Hark, my soul! it is the Lord," "O for a closer walk with God," "Jesus, where'er thy people meet," or "God moves in a mysterious way," are sung in church. But it is not their literary merit that has kept them alive. They live by the evident, almost breathing, sincerity of their every word: by their visible character of actual personal feeling and experiences. Indeed, it is curious that Cowper, by far the greatest English poet who has written hymns, never

approaches the fine poetic quality of Newman, Keble, Ellerton, or the single masterpiece of Addison. The truth is that his hymns have the strength and the weakness of a very simple nature. Only such a nature, that of the "little child" of the Gospels, can feel the love of Christ, His almost visible and sensible companionship, as Cowper does; but only a larger nature, a mind of greater breadth and culture, can utter the mystery of faith. For Cowper there is no mystery; the scheme of this world and the next, of God and man, and God's dealings with man, is quite plain: except on the side of character, he does not feel anything of the temper which said, "God is in heaven; and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few." The fine note of such hymns as "O Strength and Stay, upholding all creation," or "God of the living," where the rare quality consists as much in the consciousness of the darkness that surrounds us as in the living faith that lights it up, enough of it at least for life and hope, that is altogether beyond Cowper. At the same time, it must be said that he never falls into the opposite note, the besetting sin of the religious verse of his school. He never addresses his Master with the familiarity which shocks and pains all reverent feeling in some hymns which have been only too well known. From that, no doubt, his education saved him: it was not for nothing that he had been born in an English rectory and brought up at Westminster School. But his narrowness of creed, and indeed of mind, allows him to define on these high themes with the confident and prosaic precision of a lawyer. And even in the hymns, perhaps, it is no strictly religious subject that brings him out best as a poet; but rather his own special theme, the praise of Retirement.

*There if Thy Spirit touch the soul,
And grace her mean abode,
Oh with what peace, and joy, and love,
She communes with her God!*

*"There like the nightingale she pours
Her solitary lays;
Nor asks a witness of her song,
Nor thirsts for human praise."*

It is to be noted that most of his hymns, all written before the attack of 1773, strike a hopeful note in marked contrast to his later miserable delusions.

One other early work there is, not known to be Cowper's till long after his death. The occasion of it was a foolish publication of a cousin of his, Martin Madan, which advocated polygamy on Scriptural grounds. The affair is of no interest now, except as an extreme instance of the follies to which an unhistorical treatment

of the Bible may lead. Cowper held literal views of inspiration which in strictness would have gone a long way towards proving his cousin's absurdities, but, as may be seen in his letter to Unwin about the text that commands the giving of the other cheek, his good sense always saved him from crossing the gulf which separates *moderate* extreme views from extreme actions. In his indignation with Madan he wrote the piece called "Antithelyphthora," and it was printed anonymously in 1781. It ridicules, under the form of a more or less Spenserian allegory, the victims of the enchantress Hypothesis. Cowper is feeling his way as a satirist, and he soon found that this indirect way was not the one for him, and never returned to it. The poem is of no importance, but has been judged with absurd severity by Canon Benham in the Globe Edition. It is by no means so far away from Cowper's later satire as he supposes: what could be more exactly in that manner than the ridicule of the Berkleian philosophy, with the couplet—

*"And he that splits his cranium, breaks at most
A fancied head against a fancied post?"*

And there is even a passage in it which anticipates better things than the satires: where is a pleasanter autumn scene than this?—

*"'Twas on the noon of an autumnal day,
October hight, but mild and fair as May;
When scarlet fruits the russet hedge adorn,
And floating films envelope every thorn;
When gently, as in June, the rivers glide,
And only miss the flowers that graced their side."*

The curious thing is that it reminds us, not so much of the "Task," as of the "Tales of the Hall." The manner is exactly that of Crabbe: nine readers out of ten would unhesitatingly pronounce these lines to be Crabbe, and no one else. The thing described is what was to be Cowper's subject certainly; no one deals more in these small beauties of Nature: but to give us Cowper's manner we need a certain intimacy of individual experience which is not here.

Poems by William Cowper, Esq., of the Inner Temple, appeared in 1782. The bulk of the book consists of the eight satires, "Table Talk," "The Progress of Error," "Truth," "Expostulation," "Hope," "Charity," "Conversation," and "Retirement." "Table Talk" was placed first, as less likely than its successors to repel the ordinary reader. And there was every need for the precaution. The true criticism on them all is suggested by Cowper's own jingle in the well-known letter to Newton: "I have writ 'Charity,' not for popularity, but as well as I could, in hopes to do good!" The "hopes to do good" are but too painfully conspicuous throughout. His avowed aim is to obtain "a monitor's

though not a poet's praise," and, unhappily, the one often precludes the other. In the main the satires are sermons in verse. "Table
✓ Talk" is a dialogue, but it is not easy to make out either the distinction between the parties or the subjects of their talk. As far as there is a subject, it seems to be the need of character in public men. "The Progress of Error" contains its own criticism in the couplet—

} "*The clear harangue, and cold as it is clear,*
} *Falls soporific on the listless ear.*"

It traces human weaknesses, from their beginning in the cult of pleasure, to their end in vanity and ruin. "Truth" is a sermon on "grace," and against "works." "Expostulation" argues that the English, having been highly favoured like the Jews, will, if they do not take warning in time, fall like the Jews in unique awfulness of ruin. "Hope," beginning with the assertion that the weariness and satiety felt by all are only to be healed by a hope that looks beyond this life, ends by becoming almost a denial of all hopes except those of the poet's own religious school. "Charity" is the contrast between what man has made of man and what his Creator intended him to make. "Conversation" is in a lighter vein: it passes in review, humorously enough, the petty miseries we all suffer from hearing too much small talk or possessing too little. Is it pushing hypothesis too far to suggest that the lighter touch is already due to the influence of Lady Austen? It was written during the first few weeks of their intimacy, in the summer of 1781.* At any rate, I think it is clear that it is to her inspiration, destined to be so fruitful for Cowper, that "Retirement," the last and best of the satires, is due. I do not know whether it has been already pointed out, but it is noticeable that the subject of this piece is not only Cowper's, but, in a very special sense, at that moment, Lady Austen's. She was come into the country for the very purpose of retirement, and fully shared Cowper's theories on the subject. What she seems to have shared less completely was his particular religious tenets. Only a religious woman could have been a friend of Cowper: but Lady Austen's outlook upon most questions, and especially upon those of the limits of the morally lawful and unlawful, was altogether wider, saner, and more cheerful than Cowper's, more especially when Cowper was an echo of Newton. Her influence does not go far, as yet, but, if I am not mistaken, it is visibly there. The change just amounts to this: that life in the country is no longer praised because it is not life in the town; but because it is life among trees, and birds, and rivers. The negative

* It is true that Cowper wrote to Lady Hesketh in 1786 (Jan. 16) that he had published his first volume before Lady Austen came. But his memory deceived him. The letters to Newton and Unwin, written July 22 and July 29, 1781, show that he was beginning "Conversation" just when the friendship with Lady Austen was beginning.

merit which is the main theme of the satires begins to be forgotten in the positive, which is the main theme of the best parts of the "Task." The change may not seem a great one: but there is a world of difference between the man who looks with delight on his own things, and the man who looks with censoriousness upon those of others. So it is with pleasure and gratitude to the new inspirer of his Muse that we see Cowper pass from the vigorous opening passage which describes the universal desire for country repose, to the direct invocation of Nature—

"Be thou the great inspirer of my strains."

That one line, even modified as it is by those that precede, contains in it all the promise of Cowper's future. But a bare statement, such as this, of the subjects of the satires certainly does them less than justice. Undoubtedly there is far too much preaching in them; and undoubtedly Cowper fails altogether to understand that the moral quality of good poetry is an invisible though an invariable accident in its nature. "If a poet has as high a soul as Sophocles," said Goethe, "his influence will always be moral, let him do what he will." That is the truth, but it is one of which Cowper knew nothing. He never had anything of the temper of an artist: and he probably died without realizing that the passages in his work which had really moved people in the direction he wished to move them, were just those in which he made no open effort to influence them at all. But it would be a mistake to suppose that there is nothing in "Table Talk" and its companions but dull sermons. There is a good deal of eloquent and vigorous invective; a good deal of humorous satire, plenty of honest Whig politics, with, however, a curious disbelief in the Rockingham and Fox patriots of his day: some passages of literary criticism, some bits of interesting autobiography, and some short, too short, fragments of descriptive landscape. At least one line has had the honour of becoming a hackneyed quotation. Who remembers that it was Cowper who first said of Pope that he—

*"Made poetry a mere mechanic art,
And every warbler has his tune by heart."*

Of his vigorous eloquence at its best I do not know that there is a better specimen than the passage in "Table Talk" about the poet's mission; which begins—

*"I know the mind that feels indeed the fire
The Muse imparts, and can command the lyre:"*

which contains the proud claim—

*"A terrible sagacity informs
The poet's heart, he looks to distant storms,*

*He hears the thunder ere the tempest lowers,
And, armed with strength surpassing human powers,
Seizes events as yet unknown to man,
And darts his soul into the dawning plan,"*

but immediately repudiates any such pretensions for himself—

*"But no prophetic fires to me belong,
I play with syllables and sport in song."*

Of his invective such a passage as the attack on Lord Chesterfield in the "Progress of Error" might serve as an example:—

*"Thou polished and high-finished foe to truth,
Grey-beard corrupter of our listening youth;"*

or the apostrophe to the press, a little further on:—

*"Thou fountain, at which drink the good and wise,
Thou ever-bubbling spring of endless lies."*

His purely religious style never appears to better effect than in the beautiful lines in "Charity":—

*"When one, that holds communion with the skies,
Has filled his urn where those pure waters rise,
And once more mingles with us meaner things,
'Tis even as if an Angel shook his wings;
Immortal fragrance fills the circuit wide,
That tells us whence his treasures are supplied.
So when a ship, well freighted with the stores
The sun matures on India's spicy shores,
Has dropped her anchor, and her canvas furled,
In some safe haven of our western world,
'Twere vain enquiry to what port she went,
The gale informs us, laden with the scent."*

No obvious debt to Milton can deprive Cowper of the poet's praise for these beautiful verses. The sentiment is peculiarly his own, more tender than Milton was; and if the simile is less original, at least Cowper must have the credit of that delightful line—

"In some safe haven of our western world."

For his humour, never at all so perfect in his verse as in his letters, I should refer the inquirer to "Conversation." It is no doubt of a somewhat old-maidish quality, and clings rather close to the parlour; but was not Miss Austen an old maid, and is there not high authority for saying that even she never gets out of the parlour? In such company it is allowed to err. But perhaps none

of the deliberate attempts at humour are so successful as the best of the character sketches, such as that of the politician in "Retirement," which is thrown off with an almost Horatian felicity and good temper; and with the conclusion Horace would have delighted to give it. And Cowper makes it the opportunity of some pretty landscape work, into which his best poetic self goes. The statesman has resigned:—

*" 'Tis done ; he steps into the welcome chaise,
Lolls at his ease behind four handsome bays,
That whirl away from business and debate
The disencumbered Atlas of the State.
Ask not the boy, who, when the breeze of morn
First shakes the glittering drops from every thorn,
Unfolds his flock, then under bank or bush
Sits linking cherry-stones, or plaiting rush,
How fair is freedom ? he was always free.
To carve his rustic name upon a tree,
To snare the mole, or with ill-fashioned hook
To draw the incautious minnow from the brook,
Are life's prime pleasures in his simple view,
His flock the chief concern he ever knew ;"*

but rather, he continues, ask the statesman to whom freedom and nature are alike untasted pleasures,—

*" Her hedge-row shrubs, a variegated store,
With woodbine and wild roses mantled o'er,
Green balks and furrowed lands, the stream that spreads
Its cooling vapour o'er the dewy meads,
Downs that almost escape the enquiring eye,
That melt and fade into the distant sky,
Beauties he lately slighted as he passed,
Seem all created since he travelled last."*

Such plain diet, however, as trees and flowers soon proves insipid to one whose palate has been spoilt by power and "the town;"—

*" He sighs,—for, after all, by slow degrees,
The spot he loved has lost the power to please.
To cross his ambling pony day by day
Seems at the best but dreaming life away ;
The prospect, such as might enchant despair,
He views it not, or sees no beauty there ;
With aching heart and discontented looks
Returns at noon to billiards or to books,
But feels, while grasping at his faded joys,
A secret thirst of his renounced employs."*

*He chides the tardiness of every post,
Pants to be told of battles won or lost,
Blames his own indolence, observes, though late,
'Tis criminal to leave a sinking state,
Flies to the levée, and, received with grace,
Kneels, kisses hands, and shines again in place."*

The business of the satirist is the making of verses, hardly of poetry; and if Cowper had never got beyond these pieces, few would occupy themselves with him or his work to-day. Nor has he any claim to the highest rank in this field. The perfection of its lighter and kindlier sort asks an experience of life he did not possess, and the Juvenalian kind demands an angry energy of soul quite alien to his ease and good nature. (To the fiery quality of mind which in Dryden gave to personal invective a touch of the sublime, he had no pretension; of the unresting malignity of Pope, slowly shaping in the dark his flashing jewels of slander, Cowper's generosity of heart, if there had been nothing else, would have made him incapable. Pope and he were indeed, in every respect, alien natures. No one could write heroic couplets in that day without having Pope's brilliancy in view; but Cowper, the very opposite of Pope, not only in temper, in life and habits, in religious conviction, in mental power, but in literary taste as well, took his own road as he found it, more anxious about what he was saying, for which Pope cared little, than about how he was saying it, for which Pope cared everything.) One would have expected him to show some trace of the influence of Prior, of whose "easy jingle" he has recorded his liking; but Prior was a successful worldling and Cowper an obscure recluse: or of Young, whose ostensible object was just Cowper's own, to call the world to seriousness and in this life to suggest the next; but Young was a rhetorical Deist and Cowper a simple-minded and single-hearted Christian. Strangely enough, the man he does most resemble as a satirist is perhaps the most unlike him of them all. In his satires, as everywhere, Cowper is the most domestic of our poets, but the comparison of a very few pages will convince any one that his style bears a close resemblance to the schoolfellow whom he so much admired, the very undomestic Churchill. It is only a parallel of style, of course: with Churchill's coarseness and violence Cowper could have nothing to do. But style has subtle influences, and it is just possible that the evidently close and exact, even if unconscious, recollection of Churchill's pieces which remained in Cowper's mind, may have led him, without his knowing it, into a straining after invective and denunciation quite alien to his real nature. The pity is that he did not keep to the lighter manner. No doubt his circumstances would in any case have limited his range; but no one can tell a story with finer humour than he shows in his letters, and one is

apt to fancy sometimes that, if he had had some good genius to put him in the right path, he might have anticipated some of Crabbe's triumphs in verse or even some of Jane Austen's in prose.

The volume of 1782 was completed by some five and twenty short pieces. The majority are of no importance, and many issue from that phase of Cowper's goodness of heart, where it is only mildness, and does not rise to the delicate sweetness which is its charm and distinction elsewhere. Some are fables conveying rather obvious "lessons to mankind;" one is a Christian reflection on Horace; some are very small jokes, like the "Nose and the Spectacles," and several are mere translations. But there are six or eight things of real interest. The lines which begin, "Sweet stream that winds through yonder glade" are a humble anticipation of the manner which Wordsworth afterwards used to such wonderful effect. "A violet by a mossy stone Half hidden from the eye" is only the work of a more concentrated imagination. One may note also that in one of the translations from Vincent Bourne, that of "The Cricket," there is a stanza which good judges might take for Wordsworth—

*"Though in voice and shape they be
Formed as if akin to thee,
Thou surpasses, happier far,
Happiest grasshoppers that are;
Theirs is but a summer song,
Thine endures the winter long
Unimpaired and shrill and clear,
Melody throughout the year."*

Among the other interesting things there are the famous stanzas put into the mouth of Alexander Selkirk: there is the "Shrubbery," a voice of accepted and uncomplaining agony brought from the depth of his despair, too small and quiet to tell all its tale at once, but more moving each time we return to it: there is the pleasing "Invitation into the Country," addressed to Newton, which looks back to Milton and Horace, and forward to Tennyson: there is the great "Boadicea" Ode, the strongest thing the poet has yet done, reminding us of one of Horace's sterner and nobler political Odes. With the "Shrubbery" it is the promise and proof of the lyrical gift, which was afterwards to produce splendid fruit, but not the half of what it might have given us if its owner had realized and valued it more.

One other curious thing there is to notice. Except in the actually inspired moments, he is, at this time, as much a poet in Latin as in his own language. Only the best of the English pieces here can equal either the beauty or the sincerity of the exquisite Latin lines, "O matutini rores, auræque salubres:" his love of rural peace and retirement seldom found finer expression.

These are good things which we would not miss, but there are more and better in the second volume. But for the "Task" Cowper would hardly have ranked higher than such poets as Lovelace, or Vaughan, or Prior, remembered only by half a dozen, or even fewer, short pieces. As it is, he is the poet of the "Task," as Milton is the poet of "Paradise Lost," or Dante of the "Commedia," not as Prior is of "Solomon," Cowley of the "Davideis," or even Wordsworth of the "Excursion." It is his greatest achievement, not merely the achievement he meant to be his greatest. Perhaps no long poem since the Georgics had handled the common sights and sounds, the common feelings and doings of rural life with such sympathy and power as Cowper shows in the "Task."

Every one knows its curious origin. Lady Austen urged him to attempt a poem in blank verse, and, on his asking for a subject, gave him the sofa on which we may imagine she was at that moment lying. The first book was accordingly the "Sofa," and the whole the "Task." Lady Austen's answer shows that the invaluable influence she had upon Cowper came from the heart or the temperament, not from the head. No one who understood anything about the art of poetry could have suggested such a subject. And Cowper evidently accepted it in the only spirit in which it could be accepted, for he begins what was to be one of the most serious of English poems in the style of mock-heroic burlesque. But the important thing was to set him going and make him understand that he was not to come back again until he had accomplished something considerable; and all the credit of that belongs to Lady Austen. The rest he could be trusted to do for himself, and it is pretty to see how he does it. He has given but just a hundred lines to praise of the sofa and parody of Milton, when he makes for himself an excellent way of escape. "'Tis the gouty man who more than any one knows the delights of the sofa, but such cruel chance of realizing them I may hope never to experience—

*"For I have loved the rural walk through lanes
Of grassy swarth, close cropped by nibbling sheep
And skirted thick with intertexture firm
Of thorny boughs : have loved the rural walk
O'er hills, through valleys, and by river's brink,
E'er since a truant boy I passed my bounds
To enjoy a ramble on the banks of Thames ;
And still remember, nor without regret
Of hours that sorrow since has much endeared,
How oft, my slice of pocket store consumed,
Still hungering, penniless, and far from home,
I fed on scarlet hips and stony haws,
Or blushing crabs, or berries that emboss
The bramble black as jet, or sloes austere ;*

*Hard fare, but such as boyish appetite
Disdains not, nor the palate, undepraved
By culinary arts, unsavoury deems.
No Sofa then awaited my return,
Nor Sofa then I needed. Youth repairs
His wasted spirits quickly, by long toil
Incurring short fatigue ; and though our years,
As life declines, speed rapidly away,
And not a year but pilfers as he goes
Some youthful grace that age would gladly keep,
A tooth or auburn lock, and by degrees
Their length and colour from the locks they spare,
The elastic spring of an unwearied foot
That mounts the stile with ease, or leaps the fence,
That play of lungs, inhaling and again
Respiring freely the fresh air, that makes
Swift pace or steep ascent no toil to me,
Mine have not pilfered yet ; nor yet impaired
My relish of fair prospect : scenes that soothed
Or charmed me young, no longer young I find
Still soothing and of power to charm me still.
And witness, dear companion of my walks,
Whose arm this twentieth winter I perceive
Fast locked in mine, with pleasure such as love,
Confirmed by long experience of thy worth
And well-tried virtues, could alone inspire,—
Witness a joy that thou hast doubled long.
Thou knowest my praise of nature most sincere,
And that my raptures are not conjured up
To serve occasions of poetic pomp,
But genuine, and art partner of them all.
How oft upon yon eminence our pace
Has slackened to a pause, and we have borne
The ruffling wind, scarce conscious that it blew,
While admiration, feeding at the eye,
And still unsated, dwelt upon the scene.
Thence with what pleasure have we just discerned
The distant plough slow-moving, and, beside
His labouring team, that swerved not from the track,
The sturdy swain diminished to a boy !
Here Ouse, slow-winding through a level plain
Of spacious meads with cattle sprinkled o'er,
Conducts the eye along his sinuous course
Delighted. There, fast-rooted in his bank,
Stand, never overlooked, our favourite elms,
That screen the herdsman's solitary hut ;
While far beyond and overthwart the stream*

*That as with molten glass inlays the vale,
 The sloping land recedes into the clouds,
 Displaying on its varied side the grace
 Of hedgerow beauties numberless, square tower,
 Tall spire, from which the sound of cheerful bells
 Just undulates upon the listening ear ;
 Groves, heaths, and smoking villages remote.
 Scenes must be beautiful which, daily viewed,
 Please daily, and whose novelty survives
 Long knowledge and the scrutiny of years :
 Praise justly due to those that I describe."*

I have quoted this long passage in full because it shows with what triumphant ease Cowper makes the escape I spoke of, and because, though there are finer passages in the poem, this perhaps more than any gives the "Task" in little ; as well as because the world is so strangely constituted that there are people who will read introductions to poems, but will not read the poems themselves. More I dare not give here, but if such readers will be persuaded to turn to the text, they will see that I did not desist because what followed would have done less honour to Cowper. Will not every one feel at once that the simpler sort of natural beauty has rarely been more admirably touched ? Here is, at last, the real and full Cowper, and he preaches all the better for forgetting to preach. Nothing quite like these descriptive passages existed before in our own, or, so far as I know, in any other language. They are, as Cowper claims, absolutely sincere ; he has himself, with his own eye, seen everything he describes : it is a great deal more than other men see ; and he has found a great deal more in it. And not only his observation but his feelings are entirely his own ; the whole is what the French call *vécu* : the personal note is everywhere, though linked, as it must be in all art that is to count, with the note of the universal. The feeling to which the poet gives utterance is his own, but not all or only his own : it is representative as well as personal ; he speaks not as an isolated individual, but as the spokesman of the human race. Of its feeling, only, of course, not of its thought : no one must look to Cowper for anything like profound thought ; he is too far away from all intellectual influences for that, too content behind the narrow walls of his self-chosen cloister. His function is the interpretation of some of our best and purest feelings ; as we read him we are conscious that we, too, have experienced such feelings as his, though less in degree and of less fine quality ; he expresses for us what we cannot express for ourselves : that is his first work ; and the second is to lead us on and up to new and higher emotions of the same order, of which his poetry brings us our first revelation. Many poets have failed in the second task because they have ignored or disdained

the first. In Cowper we begin with the familiar, with what belongs to us all, and are carried, almost without knowing it, into the world that was his only, and not ours,—the poetic world of his own creation and consecration.

All this, or at least the germ of it, is in the passage just quoted. And it is the leading feature of the whole poem. Discursive as it is, we are never very long away from these simple scenes and simple emotions. The first book, which, with the fourth and sixth, contains Cowper's best work, proceeds from the passage already quoted to go through a minute description of his favourite walks at Weston, almost every line of which may be followed on the spot to-day. It is then varied by the beautiful little story of poor Kate; and by the passage about the gipsies, which shows that their poetic day had not yet come. Cowper's blank verse is never finer than in the concluding lines, which set off with his favourite text, "God made the country, and man made the town." In spite of this epigrammatic opening, it is a pupil of Milton who has written the rest: no empty imitator, but such a scholar as the master himself would have gladly come back to hear.

*"Our groves were planted to console at noon
The pensive wanderer in their shades. At eve
The moonbeam, sliding softly in between
The sleeping leaves, is all the light they wish,
Birds warbling all the music. We can spare
The splendour of your lamps, they but eclipse
Our softer satellite. Your songs confound
Our more harmonious notes: the thrush departs
Scared, and the offended nightingale is mute."*

Is it fanciful to hear, in that emphatic and solitary "scared," the sudden whirr of flight of the interrupted thrush? It is more like Tennyson than Cowper to plan such an effect; but, as Tennyson knew, there is often more in a poet's lines than he is himself quite aware of.

The second book is immeasurably inferior to the first. It is for the most part a sermon full of the poet's—

*"Hot displeasure against foolish men
That live an atheist life;"*

and, for the rest, it is a satire on clerical coxcombs and idle college dons. Cowper is, unhappily, in the stage of thought, so solemnly rebuked by Christ Himself, which believes that earthquakes and volcanoes are sent for the special punishment of the wicked; and there is no worse example than this book, the "Timepiece" as he significantly named it, of the positive and confidently abusive

narrowness which is the greatest stumbling-block in the way of his popularity to-day. It hardly contains a trace of Cowper the poet, except the fine lines—

*“ There is a pleasure in poetic pains
Which only poets know ; ”*

and the splendid outburst of patriotism which culminates in the famous—

*“ Praise enough
To fill the ambition of a private man,
That Chatham’s language was his mother tongue,
And Wolfe’s great name compatriot with his own.”*

For the rest, satire and sermon are alike ruined by their scolding tone. Society had its faults, no doubt, then as now, but such language as—

*“ ’Tis a fearful spectacle to see
So many maniacs dancing in their chains,”*

hardly strikes one as the comment either of charity or of sanity on its doings.

The theme of the third book, the “Garden,” is the innocent happiness and various occupations of the man—

*“ whom the world
Calls idle, and who justly in return
Esteems that busy world an idler too.”*

In the main, it is a Georgic on gardening, with an interest which Virgil has not because it is the story of what the poet has himself learnt and done, but yet incapable of winning and moving us, as Virgil moves us, because it is often as full of dull details as the Georgics, and Cowper’s rules for raising cucumbers are unrelieved by the verbal felicities which never quite fail Virgil, even when he is pruning vines or breeding stock. But the book contains at least two passages no reader will forget: the earnest plea for kindness to animals, culminating in the story of the favourite on whose grave he will write—

“ I knew at least one hare who had a friend ; ”

and the touching account of his own case—

*“ I was a stricken deer that left the herd
Long since ; ”*

and Who found him, drew the darts forth, and bade him live.

The next book, the “Winter Evening,” is the best and most

characteristic of the six. It is full of good things: the portraits of the postman and the waggoner, Dutch in their sincerity and wealth of detail, something more than Dutch in their imaginative sympathy; the curious account of the newspaper of the day; the invocations of Winter and Evening, the latter perhaps the most elaborate of Cowper's efforts in the Miltonic manner, but both fine things, and gaining a new interest by Blake's beautiful designs with which the kindness of Mr. Johnson allows me to illustrate them; the picture of himself dreaming unashamed before the red cinders, like Wordsworth—

*"Without emotion, hope, or aim,
In the loved presence of his cottage fire ;"*

the snowstorm; the cottage interior; the inn, and the Militia ballot; and, finally, the suburban villa and the window-box, which are called in to prove—

*"That man, immured in cities, still retains
His inborn inextinguishable thirst
Of rural scenes."*

The link between them all is the ever-present personality of the poet. No one was ever less abstract. Of things in themselves he knows nothing, and has nothing to say; his tale is always of things as he has heard, seen, experienced, above all, *felt* them. That is really the essence of the difference between him and Thomson, over so much of whose ground he travels. Cowper is the master of personal experience and detail: as Sainte-Beuve says, at the end of the second of his three appreciative essays * "*il a l'exactitude presque minutieuse.*" On the other hand, "*il y a des masses chez Thomson.*" Thomson has indeed many great qualities. He is a poet of greater mental range and power than Cowper; he has more sustained energy; and he gets and uses the full benefit of a wider life and a broader creed. When he preaches or moralizes it is as a *man*, not as an Evangelical sectary. But he is almost entirely without Cowper's note of direct sincerity, of personal feeling. He will take us through a catalogue of descriptions borrowed from works of travel or science, such as "Dr. Mead's elegant book on that subject," dressing up for us the usual lions, crocodiles, and the rest, in the established rhetorical manner. Cowper, on the other hand, needs no books, for he never leaves the field of his own experience. He talks of Olney, not of Africa; of hares and sheep, not of serpents or hyenas; of the Ouse, not the Nile. And this close clinging to his own life and haunts must have helped to bring out the best of his gifts, that in which he so far surpasses Thomson, the intimacy and tenderness of /

* *Causeries du Lundi*, xi. 177.

his sympathy. Compare, for instance, his snowstorm in this book with Thomson's. Here is the passage from "Winter:"—

*"Through the hushed air the whitening shower descends,
At first thin-wavering; till at last the flakes
Fall broad, and wide, and fast, dimming the day
With a continual flow. The cherished fields
Put on their winter robe of purest white.
'Tis brightness all: save where the new snow melts
Along the mazy current. Low the woods
Bow their hoar head; and, ere the languid sun,
Faint from the west, emits his evening ray,
Earth's universal face, deep-hid and chill,
Is one wild, dazzling waste, that buries wide
The works of man."*

Now hear Cowper:—

*"How calm is my recess, and how the frost,
Raging around, and the rough wind, endear
The silence and the warmth enjoyed within!
I saw the woods and fields at close of day
A variegated show: the meadows green,
Though faded; and the lands where lately waved
The golden harvest, of a mellow brown,
Upturned so lately by the forceful share:
I saw far off the weedy fallows smile
With verdure not unprofitable, grazed
By flocks, fast feeding, and selecting each
His favourite herb; while all the leafless groves,
That skirt the horizon, wore a sable hue,
Scarce noticed in the kindred dusk of eve.
To-morrow brings a change, a total change!
Which even now, though silently performed
And slowly, and by most unfelt, the face
Of universal nature undergoes.
Fast falls a fleecy shower. The downy flakes
Descending, and, with never-ceasing lapse,
Softly alighting upon all below,
Assimilate all objects. Earth receives
Gladly the thickening mantle, and the green
And tender blade that feared the chilling blast
Escapes unhurt beneath so warm a veil."*

Both descriptions have been eclipsed in vividness by the wonderful "London Snow" of Mr. Bridges: but why, of the two, does Cowper carry us with him so much more completely than

Thomson? The answer must be, I think, that it is because Thomson is, on the whole, outside his subject, and Cowper is entirely and absolutely a part of his. Thomson's snow falls on the haunts of imaginary shepherds; Cowper's on the fields between Olney and Weston. And how he invites our confidence from the first, by the convincing personal touches: "My recess," "I saw," "at close of day," "even now," "to-morrow"! He makes us his companions all the while. And, admirable as is the passage which follows in Thomson, with the labourer-ox and the fowls of heaven, the robin and the hare, has it ever the note of personal feeling which Cowper found for the animals? or, to keep to the lines I have quoted, has Thomson ever the secret of that tenderness with which Cowper speaks of the earth lying warm and quiet under the *protecting* snow? The fact is, Cowper's heart lies open in every line he wrote; we do not often get behind Thomson's mind. He is a poet who means to show the town how well he can write; and while he gains by knowing, what Cowper scarcely knows, that poetry demands a certain heightening, a something above the thoughts and feelings of the common hours of commonplace people, he loses at times by the very effort to act on that knowledge. If Cowper suffers sometimes by not taking himself and his work seriously enough, Thomson equally suffers by too great a sense of the importance of the *Seasons* and their poet. Art and industry are with him too all-pervading, too incessant; he cannot lie still in Nature's hands, as Cowper can in his best moments, letting her take the pen from him and write in his place.

The ~~fifth~~ book is again less interesting. It begins with a wonderful winter landscape, touches of which, such as—

*"The cattle mourn in corners where the fence
Screens them, and seem half-petrified to sleep
In unrecumbent sadness,"*

have the sombre beauty of a fine Crome. But the poet soon digresses, in his casual way, from the icicles of Nature to the ice-palace of the Empress Elizabeth, and so to tyrants, and liberty, and, finally, to the other and greater liberty which looks beyond earth for its home. A large part of the book is occupied with his political feelings, which were a generous expansion of the Whig tradition. He prays for the fall of the Bastille, for the abolition of slavery, for the reform of the laws which filled the debtors' prisons. But on the more immediate politics of the hour he is less clear-sighted, never has a good word for the Whig Opposition, and never seems to have understood that George III. was aiming at a revival of the personal monarchy which his admired Revolution had risked everything to destroy. Probably he was blinded by admiration of the king's moral character, and detestation of that of Fox.

The last book begins admirably again with that delightful line—

“ There is in souls a sympathy with sounds,”

which, of all the men of that day, Cowper alone could have written ; and it goes on to the fine “ Walk at Noon,” from which it has its name, and which is of that peculiar quality in which no one before or since has equalled Cowper. Greater men have given us greater things ; but this particular thing belongs to William Cowper, and not to any greater or smaller man. And how delightful it is !

*“ The night was winter in his roughest mood,
The morning sharp and clear. But now at noon,
Upon the southern side of the slant hills,
And where the woods fence off the northern blast,
The season smiles, resigning all its rage,
And has the warmth of May. The vault is blue
Without a cloud, and white without a speck
The dazzling splendour of the scene below.
Again the harmony comes o’er the vale,
And through the trees I view the embattled tower
Whence all the music. I again perceive
The soothing influence of the wafted strains,
And settle in soft musings as I tread
The walk, still verdant, under oaks and elms,
Whose outspread branches overarch the glade.
The roof, though moveable through all its length
As the wind sways it, has yet well sufficed,
And intercepting in their silent fall
The frequent flakes, has kept a path for me.
No noise is here, or none that hinders thought.
The red-breast warbles still, but is content
With slender notes, and more than half suppressed ;
Pleased with his solitude, and flitting light
From spray to spray, where’er he rests he shakes
From many a twig the pendant drops of ice
That tinkle in the withered leaves below.
Stillness, accompanied with sounds so soft,
Charms more than silence.”*

The signature of Cowper is on every line, almost on every word. Its quietness is his, its sincerity, its moving quality, its wealth of detail. He has noticed everything—the path “ still verdant,” the “ moveable roof ” swaying in the wind, the “ slender ” note of the robin, and his light flitting from spray to spray, the ice “ tinkling ” on the crisp withered leaves as it falls. And he has made everything his own, harmonized it all, extracted from it the particular poetic effect of which he had the secret. Who in all the long line

of our poets could have done it better, or rather, who could have done this particular thing at all?

The rest of the book, which contains some of the best passages in the poem, passes on from some more exquisite little landscapes, and some charming bits of self-revelation, to a long appeal for kindness to animals, and finally to a vision of the new heaven and new earth of his faith, in which fraud and cruelty would be known no more. There he must, on the whole, be held to fail: he has neither the profundity of mind nor the greatness of style called for by such a theme. Here, too, as elsewhere, the narrowness of his creed is in his way. Poetry demands a freedom of movement to which all systems of scientific theology are alike fatal. They present the poet with a map, on which all is precisely defined, with no escape outside its borders. With that, unless he be Dante, he can do nothing. What he needs is no measured map, but a landscape with an opening through which he may let his eyes and his dreams journey away into an infinite distance, of which he knows little except that it is the goal and home of his highest desires. Dante has indeed known how to unite the dogmatic precision of a mediæval schoolman with a sublimity of imagination no poet has ever surpassed. But the "Paradise" is a unique achievement. For Milton's most inspiring visions of a spiritual world, it is not to any of the theological passages that we must go, but to such things as the end of "Lycidas," or the "Blest Pair of Sirens," or the noble lines with which "Comus" opens.

For the rest, the book is, perhaps, the most striking evidence of the way in which Cowper "half perceived and half created" the humanitarian reforms which were to be brought about by the generation that was growing up at his death. Few poets have had more direct influence. He must not, of course, be given the credit of what was mainly accomplished by a great religious movement; but, while he owed a great deal of his popularity to the enthusiasm of those who shared his religious views, the Evangelicals owed a great deal to the poet who carried their doctrines into places not to be reached by any preacher's voice. No books ever contained more about the clergy or less about religion than Jane Austen's novels. Few circles would have been less likely to give a welcome to Revivalist "enthusiasm." But her unclerical clergymen and their lay acquaintances are not indisposed to read Cowper aloud to the ladies whom they admire. And no small part of the work of bringing the mind of that generation to a more humane view of things belongs to the poet. If debtors are no longer imprisoned, if India is no longer oppressed, if public schools are no longer places of barbarism and terror, if slaves are free, and animals protected from cruelty both by opinion and by law, our gratitude must not forget that Cowper pleaded for them all in what was the most popular poem of its day.

Whether Wordsworth had the "Task" in his mind when he called his poem the "Excursion," I do not know. But, however that may be, it is inevitable that the two poems should suggest each other. Both are occupied with the praise of nature, of retirement, of meditation, of simplicity of life. And many passages in the older poet might well have been written by his greater successor. What, for instance, could be more exactly in Wordsworth's vein than the passage in this last book of the "Task," in which Cowper prefers the wisdom of nature to the knowledge furnished by books?

*"But trees, and rivulets whose rapid course
Defies the check of winter, haunts of deer,
And sheepwalks populous with bleating lambs,
And lanes in which the primrose ere her time
Peeps through the moss that clothes the hawthorn root,
Deceive no student. Wisdom there, and truth,
Not shy, as in the world, and to be won
By slow solicitation, seize at once
The roving thought, and fix it on themselves."*

The two poems have also the same defect. Cowper, like Wordsworth, too rarely arrests and surprises as poetry should. Both are too frequently, in matter and style, on the common level of ordinary good and thoughtful people. And Wordsworth's heights are quite out of Cowper's reach. Indeed, their love of nature is as unlike as it is like: with the contrast between Derwentwater and the Ouse; and that between a large spiritual imagination always brooding over nature's mystery and beauty, and a gentle delight in trees and rivers and clouds which feels no mystery and asks no questions. Wordsworth has, of course, this latter temper too, but the other is almost always felt behind it. And though Wordsworth, like Cowper, preaches too much, he has the instinct of the poet to keep him from controversy which sometimes brings Cowper almost to the level of the religious newspapers. He is always serene where Cowper is so often angry; always large and human where Cowper is narrow with the narrowness of a sect; always positive and persuasive where Cowper is negative and disputatious. Perhaps it is just this greater philosophic strength which makes his stories and his bits of special description more abstract, less vivid, less simply sincere than Cowper's. Part of the charm of Cowper lies in our being able to trace him literally step by step at Weston, and yet he has made it all poetry; and so it is with his touches about himself and his friends. Wordsworth, on the other hand, much as Ellen's tale resembles Kate's for instance, is apt to make his characters—Simon Lee, or Michael, or the Leech Gatherer—embodiments as it were of humanity: he probably never felt the sympathy and affection

for individuals which Cowper everywhere shows. It is Man and Nature, on the whole, that interest Wordsworth; with Cowper, on the whole, it is men and Olney and Weston Underwood.

With the "Task" were published the already famous "John Gilpin," the one piece of verse in which Cowper gave rein to the sort of humour, peculiarly his own, which overflows everywhere in his letters. It is perhaps the single performance of his on which the seal of universal popularity has been set. To discuss it would be an absurdity; its immortality, like that of *Alice in Wonderland*, is secured for it by the adventure which wins the heart of the nursery, and the unobtruded but unforgettable sketch of John's personality, which holds the admiration of the parlour and the study. We know John Gilpin before the end, as we know Alice, almost as we know a greater John at the end of Shakespeare's "Henry IV."

The volume was completed by Cowper's attack on public schools, which he called "Tirocinium," and of which the chief interest now, outside its one passage of pure poetry,—

"We love the play-place of our early days,"

lies in the curious picture it gives of the extraordinary liberty allowed to Westminster boys in Cowper's day, which is rendered still more extraordinary by the fact that they were much younger than public school boys now are, as is shown by Cowper's account of their amusements. The poem is written in rhymed couplets, and the opening passage shows Cowper's increased mastery of his art, almost recalling the weighty and splendid manner of Dryden. In later editions, Cowper added a few other pieces, such as the "Death of Mrs. Throckmorton's Bullfinch," an admirable trifle, which would have been perfect if it had had just that touch of pity for the bird's fate which one would have thought Cowper the last poet to omit; the "Rose," so warmly praised by Sainte-Beuve; the "Poplar Field," of which Tennyson said, "People nowadays hold this style and metre light; I wish there were any who could put words together with such exquisite flow and evenness;" and the beautiful lines on his mother's picture, which the same great poet told Palgrave he scarcely dared to read for fear of breaking down. Of these last one can only ask whether the rhymed couplet has ever been handled so softly and warmly, ever put to such tender use? There is nothing left in it, as Cowper manages it here, of the hardness and coldness which are the inevitable drawback of Pope's icy brilliancy. It is really impossible to overpraise the lines. They are perfect in a vein which is Cowper's own, that of the quiet home affections, where he leaves Wordsworth far behind, though Wordsworth was brother, husband, and father, and Cowper hardly the first, and the two last not at all. Of the other pieces, there is little that need be said; but the "Poplar Field" has one line that ought

never to be forgotten, in which all the delightfulness of all the poplared river-banks of the world seems to have concentrated itself,—

*"The poplars are felled; farewell to the shade,
And the whispering sound of the cool colonnade."*

One could have guessed, even if he had told us nothing, that Tennyson would have envied that second line. And note how Cowper's English has now become incomparably superior to his Latin, in which, in early days, he moved more easily;—

"Conticuere susurri omnisque evanuit umbra"

is a poor substitute for its English sister.

The remaining pieces were not printed among the works of Cowper till after his death. The most important of them are the "Loss of the Royal George," "Valediction," "Yardley Oak," the lines "To Mary" (Mrs. Unwin), the noble sonnet also addressed to her, and, last of all, the terrible "Castaway," written at the very end of his life. There are also some charming trifles and compliments, very gracefully and easily thrown off; such as the lines to his friend Mr. Bull, those called "Gratitude" sent to Lady Hesketh, "Catharina," "The Retired Cat," and the epitaphs on "Neptune" and "Fop."

None of these have contributed so much to Cowper's general popularity as the "Royal George," which so many of us have learnt by heart in our first schoolroom. It is one of the most famous—perhaps the most widely known of all—of the pieces consecrated by English poets to the glory of our Navy. Tennyson's "Revenge" is a greater thing certainly; Campbell's best Odes as great, perhaps, with a very different greatness; and Sir Francis Doyle's "Loss of the Birkenhead" is an impressive rendering of an heroic story. And the living author of "Admirals All" has shown that our naval glories are an undying source of fine poetry. But that is where the difference lies. In the tale Cowper had to tell there is no heroism, and no glory. He had nothing to help him to move us but the awful suddenness of the fate of four hundred men. There is no action; the whole position is one purely passive. And he has not the resource of the imagined personality of the ship, dying in such inglorious silence after braving the roar of a hundred battles; for the ship does not die, but is weighed up to float and fight again. Yet what an effect the poet has produced! He has pressed into his service all that seemed most in his way, indeed, all that appeared most ineffective; the calm, the security of home waters, the admiral at his desk, is just what is made to produce the effect. But it is more than that. The secret of the success lies in no detail, but in the whole treatment. Few poems in any language illustrate better the power of great verse. It would be nothing in

a paraphrase; it is very little in Cowper's Latin translation. But no sooner have we heard that rich and sonorous opening "Toll for the brave," like the great bell of some cathedral, than we are carried away and up above ourselves into no ordinary mood. And there the poet keeps us all through by his noble and serious simplicity, in no state of rhetorical excitement, but rather in that quiet gravity of thought which befits the presence of Death in Life.

"Valediction" is a piece of personal history. No one can put more meaning into the word "friendship" than Cowper. His affectionate inconsistency made his friends exceptions to the rules by which he judged the rest of the world; and nearly all of them have a place of honour in his verse. But these lines give the other side of the picture. When he published his first volume he sent it to a few of his friends, among them to Thurlow, whom he had already congratulated on becoming Lord Chancellor, and to Colman, who was then manager of the Haymarket Theatre. Neither took any notice of his gift, and Colman made matters worse by not sending him a copy of a translation of the *Ars Poetica*, which he published soon afterwards. Cowper's indignation was in proportion to the warmth with which he himself remembered old friendships, and he expressed it in this poem, the counterpart to the "Epistle to Joseph Hill," published with his next volume, which was not sent either to Thurlow or to Colman. He says in a letter to Newton (July 9, 1785), "I have allowed myself to be a little pleased with an opportunity to show them that I resent their treatment of me. . . . They, indeed, are the former friends to whom I particularly allude in my epistle to Mr. Hill, and it is possible they may take to themselves a censure they so well deserve. If not, it matters not, for I shall never have any communication with them hereafter."

In this last point, however, he proved mistaken. Thurlow did not, indeed, provide for him, as he had jestingly promised in their early days as fellow clerks, but he renewed acquaintance, had some correspondence with Cowper about Homer, after he published his translation, and showed some friendly interest in him in other ways; and I have before me two most affectionate letters from Colman to Cowper, which are preserved among the Cowper MSS. at Welborne Rectory. They were written from Bath, in January, 1785, and May, 1786; and though they give no explanation of his neglect to acknowledge the first volume, they must have been pleasant reading to the poet, as indeed they are to us. Somebody had evidently hinted Cowper's annoyance to Colman, and he now sends his "Horace," asks for and receives the "Task," invites Cowper to write a "Domicilium" as the answer to his "Tirocinium," makes free and friendly criticism on his poems, and busies himself about getting subscribers for his "Homer." The opening sentences of the first letter will be enough to show that the friendly allusions to him in the letters of Cowper's last years were not undeserved.

Bath, January 22, 1785

"Be assured, my dear old friend and acquaintance, my dear Cowper, that I never lost the remembrance of the sweet counsel we took together. I have often thought of you with a most affectionate regret, and often mentioned you in terms that went not only from the mouth, but the heart. Your volume of poems gave me particular pleasure; for I had some time before been told you were no more. And could you suppose for a moment that for three dirty half-crowns, at which my translation was rated, I would affront a dear friend? Recall old times, and late hours, and all hours, and I am sure you would scorn the imputation on me. I am just what I was, just what you left me, the same feeling, fretful, fond, and I will say faithful, creature you once knew me."

"Valediction" was, of course, not published. It was sent to Unwin on November 10, 1783. In sending it Cowper merely remarks that the lines are not for the press, adding, "I lay you under no other injunction." Hayley printed the latter part of the piece; the whole first appeared in Johnson's edition, 1815.

"Yardley Oak" is a fragment; but Cowper has left nothing in which his imagination rises higher. It would be curious to know if he had been reading Shakespeare at the time he wrote it. Certainly it stands alone among his works in being rather akin to Shakespeare than to Milton, both in the particular vein of reflection and in the movement of the blank verse.

*"Thou wast a bauble once ; a cup and ball,
Which babes might play with."*

And again—

*"Time made thee what thou wast, king of the woods,
And Time hath made thee what thou art, a cave
For owls to roost in."*

And that fine line—

"Slow into such magnificent decay."

Do they not all belong to the wide-ranging Shakespearian order of imagination? and have they not their measure of the soaring freedom of Shakespeare's verse?

Of the two poems, which are the immortal record of Cowper's devotion to Mrs. Unwin, the stanzas, to which one is here added from the original MS., are a crowning instance of his rare gift of transforming the common earth of daily life into purest poetic gold. It must be confessed, however, that the ear is fatigued before the end by the repeated refrain, "My Mary." The other is one of the finest sonnets in the English language. Believers in the orthodox

Italian sonnet will like to notice how admirably the division between the octave and sextet is marked; and will be confirmed in their conviction that, though genius can do many things, it can never make any sort of irregular sonnet produce an effect equal to this beautiful rise and fall.

Nothing need be said of the occasional pieces, except that lovers of tobacco will find the most poetic of the praises their goddess has ever received in the lines addressed by a poet who did not worship her to his friend Mr. Bull who did; that more charming verse has never been made out of a trifling incident than the humorous lines that relate the adventure of the poet's cat and give us so many glimpses of the poet by the way; that no dogs were ever happier in their elegist than those whose epitaphs may still be read, with increasing difficulty, on their tombstones in the Wilderness at Weston. Their fame was secured them in some of the poet's last happy days; when he had once left the Wilderness, never to return, there were no more happy days and no more trifles in verse. The only verse of any importance written during the last sad years in Norfolk was the "Castaway," which in its very power and intensity is the most awful evidence of the final shipwreck of his reason. The easy stanza in which it is composed is not the most effective for so terrible a theme; but no neglect of the more artificial means of producing poetic effect could detract from the result where the story itself is told with an energy of concentration that comes straight from an experience written in burning letters on the poor poet's heart and brain.

The rest of Cowper's poems are translations from the Greek, Latin, French, and Italian. The most important of these, the translation of Homer, in which he himself took so much pride and pleasure, is omitted in this edition from considerations of space.

No attempt has been made in this Introduction to claim for Cowper the rank of our greatest poets. Such an attempt would be an absurdity. But with him, as with others, the thing is to distinguish the essential and immortal part from the transitory and accidental. They cannot, indeed, be definitely separated, for the poet himself has joined them together. But the needful thing is that the one should not hide from us the presence and beauty of the other. No truer poet than William Cowper ever wrote the English language. He did greater things than he knew, and if he had known their greatness might have done greater still. It is possible to look at Nature through many different sorts of glasses. The Elizabethans looked at her chiefly through a glass of rather far-fetched fancy; Milton chiefly through a richly coloured glass of universal scholarship; Thomson through one of rhetoric, abstraction, and Deism. Cowper's way is quite unlike any of them. Neither fancy, nor learning, nor philosophy came between him and his object. His creed does occasionally; his sympathetic tenderness

always. Otherwise it is the thing itself, river, tree, or hill, that he gives us in naked simplicity. That simplicity was the central element in his character, and it is the secret both of what he confessed and of what he discovered. The perfectly simple can ask questions and reveal facts which no one else can reveal or ask. So it was with Cowper. He takes up his pen to amuse himself, to describe his walks, and his friends, and his garden, and his pets, and in the result finds himself, as it were by accident, a great poet, and a poet of a new order. He, more than any one else, discovered that a man may be himself, and may tell the plain truth, and yet be a poet. It is a discovery which has since been pushed too far; but in his day it was real and important. Previous poets had used their own experiences and feelings often enough, but as a rule they had dressed them up for appearance on the printed page. That is a perfectly legitimate thing to do. But Cowper did not do it, and that he did not is both his strength and his weakness. It is his weakness, because by confining himself to a plain confession of his own feelings and doings, and those of his little circle of friends, he could not attempt to deal with human life in its variety and complexity, as his contemporary Crabbe did both before and after him with such vigour and truth, and because not only human life as a whole, but also Nature as a whole, was, by these restrictions, out of his reach. The large philosophy of Wordsworth was as impossible for him as the universal portrait gallery of Crabbe. But this limitation was also Cowper's strength. For it may have been only on condition of renouncing loftier ambitions that he succeeded in placing himself, his own heart, and his little world, on the page of his verse, with such admirable ease, intimacy, and truth. And to have done that is to be immortal, for, in poetry, immortality lies just there—in the felicitous marriage of what is beautiful and what is true.

APPENDIX TO INTRODUCTION

UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF WILLIAM COWPER

I. TO JOHN AND CATHARINE JOHNSON

II. TO JOSEPH HILL

IT has been thought desirable to take the present opportunity of printing some unpublished letters of the poet, to a few of which allusion has been made in the foregoing introduction. The letters to Joseph Hill are the property of the Rev. Canon Cowper Johnson, of Yaxham Rectory; and those addressed to John and Catharine Johnson belong to the Rev. Henry Barham Johnson, of Welborne Rectory, Norfolk. There are fourteen letters addressed to John Johnson and his sister, four of which have been already partially published. The part previously published is small. To Joseph Hill there are twenty-one letters, of one of which one paragraph has been printed before. To these five partially published letters, foot-notes, mentioning that fact, are appended. All the rest are entirely new. Their chief interest is to illustrate afresh the swiftness of affection with which Cowper went to meet his new-found Norfolk relations, and the entirely trusting tenacity with which he clung to the tried friendship of Hill.

LIST OF THE LETTERS

1.	To JOHN JOHNSON	.	.	.	.	December 18, 1790.
2.	„ „ „	.	.	.	.	June 1, 1791.
3.	„ „ „	.	.	.	.	August 27, 1791.
4.	To CATHARINE JOHNSON	.	.	.	.	February 3, 1792.
5.	To JOHN JOHNSON	.	.	.	.	March 31, 1792.
6.	„ „ „	.	.	.	.	November 5, 1792.
7.	„ „ „	.	.	.	.	January 18, 1793.
8.	„ „ „	.	.	.	.	March 3, 1793.
9.	„ „ „	.	.	.	.	June 4, 1793.
10.	„ „ „	.	.	.	.	June 7, 1793.
11.	„ „ „	.	.	.	.	June 28, 1793.
12.	„ „ „	.	.	.	.	July 10, 1793.
13.	„ „ „	.	.	.	.	October 23, 1793.
14.	„ „ „	.	.	.	.	November 30, 1793.
15.	To JOSEPH HILL	.	.	.	.	May 31, 1777.
16.	„ „ „	.	.	.	.	June 6, 1778.
17.	„ „ „	.	.	.	.	March 4, 1783.
18.	„ „ „	.	.	.	.	February 4, 1784.
19.	„ „ „	.	.	.	.	May 24, 1784.
20.	„ „ „	.	.	.	.	September 11, 1784.
21.	„ „ „	.	.	.	.	December 21, 1786.
22.	„ „ „	.	.	.	.	January 1, 1787.
23.	„ „ „	.	.	.	.	January 27, 1788.
24.	„ „ „	.	.	.	.	October 25, 1788.
25.	„ „ „	.	.	.	.	November 15, 1788.
26.	„ „ „	.	.	.	.	December 16, 1788.
27.	„ „ „	.	.	.	.	April 14, 1789.
28.	„ „ „	.	.	.	.	December 14, 1789.
29.	„ „ „	.	.	.	.	August 7, 1790.
30.	„ „ „	.	.	.	.	September 4, 1790.
31.	„ „ „	.	.	.	.	September 30, 1790.
32.	„ „ „	.	.	.	.	December 11, 1790.
33.	„ „ „	.	.	.	.	April 6, 1791.
34.	„ „ „	.	.	.	.	July 12, 1791.
35.	„ „ „	.	.	.	.	July 15, 1792.

LETTERS TO JOHN AND CATHARINE
JOHNSON

1

*Weston, December 18th, 1790 **

MY DEAREST JOHNNY,

I address you with a new pen, a great rarity with me, and for which I am indebted to my Lady Cousin. And this I do the very day after the receipt of your letter, having an ardent desire to tell you in legible characters how much I, and how much we all love and are obliged to you. The oysters, like those you sent first, surpass all encomium; and the Cottenham cheeses were especially welcome, being always cheeses that deserve to be numbered among the best in the world, and cheeses beside which we have not tasted many years. We thank you with no common thanks, but with such as your kindness merits.

But what thanks can I render you proportioned to your zeal exerted in favour of my subscription? Be assured that I shall never forget it, speed as it may, and in order to immortalize it will record it immediately in verse which must be of the extemporary kind, because I have no time for anything better.

There was no market town in all
The land of the Iceni,
Where Johnny did not loudly call
For everybody's guinea.

But gold was scarce, and we regret,
That folks were grown so wise
That few thought Homer half so sweet
As sausage and mince pies.

I fear, my Johnny, that this will prove the case, but whether it should or not my obligation to thee is equal. In the mean time I perceive myself so flattered by the instances of illustrious success mentioned in your letter, that I feel all the amiable modesty, for which I was once so famous, sensibly giving way to a spirit of vainglory. The King's College subscription makes me proud, the effect that my verses have had on your two young friends, the mathematicians, makes me proud; and I am, if possible, prouder

* Part of this letter has already been printed.

still of the contents of the letter that you enclose. You must give my most respectful compliments to Mr. Reeve, the writer of it, and you must tell him how much I feel myself obliged to him for his own subscription, so handsomely given, and for the readiness with which he gives me also his interest with others. I know not what Mr. Cowper that gentleman can have met at Saffron Walden, and whom he supposes me. A cousin of mine he must have been, but which of my cousins I cannot even conjecture. For my own part I was never there, nor ever had the happiness to be in his company.

You complained of being stupid, and sent to me one of the cleverest letters. I have not complained of being stupid, and have sent you one of the dullest. But it is no matter; I never aim at anything above the pitch of everyday scribble when I write to those I love.

Homer proceeds, my boy. We shall get through in time, and I hope by the time appointed. We are now in the 10th Iliad. I expect the ladies every minute to breakfast, and will be responsible to you for a letter in due time from each. You have their best love. Mine attends the whole army of Donnes at Mattishall Green assembled. How happy should I find myself were I but one of the party! My capering days are over, but do you caper for me, that you may give them some idea of the happiness I should feel were I in the midst of them.

I am, my dearest Johnny,

Yours,

WILLIAM COWPER

You will remember, I hope, your promised call here in January, or at whatever time you leave Norfolk.

Mrs. Hewitt, Mrs. Balls, Mrs. Bodham, and Kate! May God bless you all together, and yours with you. Amen.

I admire your advertising boards; that which you sent hither is gone to Newport Pagnell to catch as many gudgeons there as will bite, and then it will go to catch others at Woburn. I shall insist on defraying the cost.

*Weston, June 1, 1791 **

MY DEAREST JOHNNY,

Now you may rest. Now I can give you joy of the period of which I gave you hope in my last, the period of all your labours in my service. But this I can foretell you also. That if you persevere in serving your friends at this rate, your life is likely to be a life of labour: yet persevere; your rest will be the sweeter

* The first paragraph of this letter has been printed before.

hereafter. In the mean time I wish you, if at any time you should find occasion for him, just such a friend as you have proved to me.

I have sent your list, your numerous and splendid list, to Johnson, desiring him to copy it and return it to me, that it may serve me for the correction of the printed copy. I have also given him instructions, according to your desire, to send my Homer as a gift to the willing but insufficient men of Sidney, and have given them a place among their brethren. But some precaution in this case will be expedient. It will be necessary that you should intimate to them or to some of them, by some means or other, that I have actually these gracious intentions toward them, otherwise when they shall receive the volumes there will be danger lest they should think me impertinent, and themselves obliged to pay for them.

I have entered the name of Dr. James, the headmaster of Rugby, since I wrote, and have had a letter from a Mr. Jermyn of Ipswich, offering me his own and the names of two other persons in his neighbourhood; but he made no mention of either first or last payment, though he desired the volumes might be sent immediately on publication. For this reason, and because it was altogether an odd letter, instead of snapping at his proposal, I referred him to Johnson. He may take offence perhaps, and I may lose him and his friends too; but I saw no remedy. Why should not there be book swindlers as well as swindlers of everything else? I have also had a letter from New York, from a certain Dr. Cogswell, unknown to me. He does not write to me on the subject of Homer, I wish he did, but to tell me that my "Task" has been reprinted in that city, and so forth.

And now, dearest Johnny, I have told thee all the news, and have done it with the very pen I used when you were here, unmended and unrelieved by any other. Learn economy from me.

You promised to be here on the 9th June. Keep your promise if possible, but if anything should happen to alter the day, give us notice, for I cannot bear vain expectations. Give our best love to your aunt and sister, whom we are impatient to see, and may God give you all a good journey hither.

With Mrs. U.'s best love,

Yours ever,

WM. COWPER

How must I thank and acknowledge the civilities of Mrs. Merrill?

*Weston Underwood, August 27th, 1791 **

MY DEAREST JOHNNY,

If my eyes will serve me to write to you I shall be glad, but certain it is that they will not serve me both to do that, and to read your two letters over before I begin. I must answer them therefore from memory, and if I forget anything material, the fault shall be mended hereafter. You will ask what ails my eyes? I answer that they are very weak and somewhat inflamed, and have never indeed been well since that suffusion of bloody memory that happened when you were here.

Your first letter, I remember, gave me some pleasant notices—such as that of your safe arrival in Norfolk, of the improvement of yours and my dear Catharine's health, and of the good tidings you heard at Cambridge concerning the success of my Homeric labours; all these were pleasant intimations, and for them all I thank you. The little that I have heard about Homer myself, has been equally or more flattering than even Dr. Cheatham's intelligence, so that I have good reason to hope that I have not grubbed the pen in vain, nor studied the old Grecian and how to dress him so long and so intensely, to no purpose. At present I am idle, both on account of my eyes as aforesaid, and because I know not to what to attach myself in particular. Many different plans and projects are recommended to me. Some call aloud for original verse, others for more translation, and others for other things. Providence I hope will direct me in my choice, for other guide I have none, nor wish another.

Elizabeth, the poetess, is arrived, and shall be distributed to all who have claims upon her. I have not read a line of her yet, nor ever shall, unless her type should grow larger, which is not probable, or my eyes stronger.

Mr. Palmer, and Butlin the shoemaker, and Nicols the tailor shall be paid the first time I go to Olney, which will be either to-day or on Monday. As you went away unpaying, so you went away unpaid. I am in your debt for a hundred Apollos at least, and I know not what besides. I shall have a better memory, I hope, for these matters when I see you next. God bless you, my dearest Johnny.

You say well, my dearest Kate, that when you write to me you are afraid of you know not what. I am only a poor author, my dear, not a critic. You cannot guess what pleasure it gives me that your health is so much improved. God grant the continuance of it, for his gift it is, since means and medicines are chaff always without

* Part of the second paragraph of this letter has been printed before, incorrectly dated "Aug. 9th."

his blessing. Give my kindest love to Coz Balls. I am truly sorry that she has been so much indisposed. I thank her for Hayley's 'Poems,' and will take good care of it, as well as of our great grandsire's poems which I forgot to restore to her. May you soon find yourselves comfortably settled at Dereham, and meet with no more such landlords as you found in Bucks. • Adieu, my dearest Kate; my love to your goldfinch, and tell him I rejoice that Norfolk air agrees with him.

Mrs. Unwin's health is much as usual, and she is always mindful of you all, giving the best proof of it by never ceasing to pray for you. Adieu. I am affectionately, and most affectionately, with my best remembrances to Mr. and Mrs. Bodham,

Yours,

WILLIAM COWPER

The letter to Dr. Kerr goes to-morrow, and could not go sooner. No fee will accompany it, because none is wanted.

Johnny seems to forget Kitche's promised coat, but he does not forget it. His rags remind him of it continually.

P.S.—My Cousin Balls' note did not come to hand till the day after you were gone, and then I found it at Mr. Palmer's shop, where I called with a letter for the post.

4

Weston Underwood, Friday, February 3rd, 1792

MY DEAREST KATE,

I know not that I shall even now be able to make a letter of this, so short my mornings seem, and I have such a multiplicity of employments, but the consciousness of long arrears to my friends at Dereham begins to be so distressing to me, that I thrust everything aside for the sake of discharging them, if it be indeed possible that I should find opportunity to do so.

I have an excuse, however, for not having written sooner, the force of which you will allow. You must understand, then, that to-morrow it will be seven weeks since Mrs. Unwin was taken in appearance dangerously ill, and I have consequently myself been more or less in a state of almost continual apprehension. Her disorder was sudden, and, of course, alarming; a giddiness of the most violent kind, attended for some minutes with a total disability to stand or even to set her foot properly under her. She called to me to save her while she was in the act of falling, and I was with her just soon enough to prevent her coming to the ground. From that day to this she has indeed been in a state of recovery, but so extremely slow and gradual that the difference made by a whole week is

hardly perceptible. Weak, however, as she still is, she has so far regained her strength as to be able, when the weather will permit, to take two or three turns in the walk, and is there at this moment—no, not at this moment, for she is this moment come in again—and I shall walk with her myself as soon as my writing hour is over.

I know, my Kate, that you will allow, as I have already said, the validity of this apology. It is indeed but too substantial, and if the Queen herself were my correspondent I should account it good enough to offer even to her Majesty. If you did but know how often I think of you all, you would be satisfied whether I wrote or not; but for that, perhaps, you would not give me implicit credit were I to be always silent. Behold a letter, therefore, such as it is, once more to assure you that I love you.

Tell Johnny that I shall be most happy to see him whenever it will suit him to visit Weston again. Tell him also that, though I lose almost all the pleasure of it in my anxiety for Mrs. Unwin, I receive continually fresh testimonies, some by letter and some by report, of the success of my Homer. I mention it merely because I know that he and you and all my Norfolk friends will be gratified by the intelligence.

Lady Hesketh sends her love to him, and bids me say that she will address a letter to the Knight of the Belfry as soon as possible.

Remember me affectionately to Cousin Balls. I am happy to find that you and your brother, whom I love at my heart, continue still to enjoy the benefit of Dr. Kerr's prescription. You are all three, I hope, well and happy in your new habitation. Write to tell me so, give my love to our friends at Mattishall when you see them, and accept our united best remembrances.

Adieu, my dearest Kate,

Yours very affectionately,

WILLIAM COWPER

5

Weston Underwood, March 31st, 1792

MY DEAREST JOHNNY,

I have this moment finished a letter to your namesake the bookseller, and have reported to him your complaints of his silence and his neglect to send the three sets of my poems that you ordered.

Things sometimes fall out more critically without any management of ours than all our management would effect. So it has happened in the case of your kind present to me and little Tom.*

* Throckmorton.

It arrived on the eve of his birthday, and on that very day, therefore, I sent it, accompanied with a letter to his little self, in which I informed him that it came from you. I have not seen any of the family since, but have heard that they were much pleased, and so forth.

I have taxed my wits for six complimentary lines on Sir John Fenn and his lady. Of the latter you speak decidedly, giving me to understand that she is everything a panegyrist would wish; but concerning the merits of the former you are so silent that I stand in doubt whether I ought to compliment him at all. Yet to present him with my name and handwriting to be inserted in his collection, taking at the same time no notice of him, but of his wife only, would be a palpable affront. I have therefore found it necessary to make them equal sharers in my praise. But praise I have none for the undeserving. I have praised none such yet, and, knowing them to be such, I never will. Tell me therefore how the case stands, but first read the lines, which done, you will be able to judge better.

TO SIR JOHN FENN

Two omens seem propitious to my fame,
Your spouse embalms my verse, and you, my name;
A name which, all self-flatt'ry far apart,
Belongs to one who ven'rates in his heart
The wise and good, and therefore, of the few
Known by those titles, Sir, both yours and you.

W. C.

I must know likewise if he binds these matters together in a book, or whether he keeps them in a bundle. If the latter, then I can send them to you properly transcribed in my next letter. But if he binds them, as Miss More does, then I must wait till you can take them hence with you, for in that case they must not be creased and bumbled. Patty More's I put between two boards shaped and shaven for the purpose. Tell me in any case, is he wise and good, such at least as may be honestly so entitled, or is he not? If not, then the affair is desperate, for I cannot give him my handwriting without some compliment, and I must not compliment his wife exclusively.

Give my love to Mrs. Balls and to Catharine. Thank the last for her letter to me, and the first for hers to Mrs. Unwin. She will answer it as soon as she is able to write without incurring some disorder or other in her head, and I will write to your aunt as soon as my perpetual engagements will allow me a moment to do it in.

I rejoice, my dear boy, that you have methodized your reading so judiciously and have put yourself into a course of study. Suffer

nothing to divert you from it. Especially I rejoice that you have a due sense of the importance of your future function. May the great Bishop of the Church himself be present at your ordination, and send you forth to preach with better credentials than any Right Reverend can give you !

Mrs. Unwin unites in love to you all. We are sorry to want you so long, but approve so much of your reason for not coming sooner that we complain not.

Yours, my dear Johnny,
WILLIAM COWPER

6

*Weston Underwood, November 5th, 1792 **

MY DEAREST JOHNNY,

I give you many thanks for your very entertaining account of the characters and conversation you met with at my little book-seller's. But you forget to tell me if anything passed between you and Johnson on the subject of my present backwardness in my work and unavoidable procrastination. I have done nothing since you went except that I have finished the sonnet which I told you I had begun, and sent it to Hayley, who is well pleased therewith, and has by this time transmitted it to whom it most concerns. By the way, you omit likewise to tell me if you called on Romney, and if you gave him proper directions for sending Hayley's portrait hither. This it is necessary that I should know, because if you did not give him such directions, I must. I wish to know, likewise, if you scraped acquaintance with the Turkish maker of razor-strops. Among your other omissions, omit not, I beseech you, by any means to make our united thanks in the handsomest manner to Mr. Heath for the pheasants he was so kind as to favour us with, which arrived in fine preservation, and were excellent.

I would not give the Algebraist sixpence for his encomiums on my "Task" if he condemns my Homer, which I know in point of language is equal to it, and in variety of numbers superior. But the character of the former having been some years established, he follows the general cry, and, should Homer establish himself as well, and I trust he will hereafter, I shall have his warm suffrage for that also. But if not it is no matter. Swift says somewhere, there are a very few good judges of poetry in the world, who lend their taste to those who have none, and your man of figures is probably one of the borrowers.

I thank thee, my dear Johnny, for fighting my battles with this critic so manfully as you did, and felicitate myself and you on the victory you gained. May you argue as syllogistically and with as

* A small part of this letter has been already printed.

much success when you come to dispute in the schools, and, if you recollect that I am, and feel myself to be, nearly interested in that event too, perhaps you may. You will discover in due time that you have no need to hold your peace through fear of any man. In the mean time I commend your silence while religion was the topic. There was no hope that you could convince the disputants, and you might possibly have entangled yourself. But of this I am sure, and rejoice to find you so much of the same mind, that, if they do not choose to be born again, unless God gives them grace to repent of their folly, they shall never see his kingdom.

The post that brought me yours brought me likewise a letter from Mr. Rose. He speaks of you in the kindest manner, and says you have won all their hearts.

You mention a new edition of my poems in quarto which Johnson means to give me. You mean a set of them, I presume? But the expression, having some ambiguity in it, calls for an explanation.

Mrs. Unwin is as well as when you went, and I hope a little better. Adieu in great haste. Our united love attends yourself and yours, whose I am most truly and affectionately,

WILLIAM COWPER

7

Friday, January 18th, 1793

MY DEAREST JOHNNY,

Two or three lines written as fast as I can scratch are all that you will get from me this morning. Mrs. Unwin is coming down, and will immediately want my attentions. I have a mind not to tell thee how we do, traitor and varlet as thou art, not to come thyself and see. All that you sent has arrived safe, and for all we thank you heartily, but no letter enclosed with the hare, nor any other letter have I had from you save the letter I am now answering, and which I have this moment received. The coachman and post-boy are both thieves, no doubt.

The Roses have left us some time, and, hoping to see you immediately after their departure, I did not write. And to this you may add, if you please, that I have not lately had a moment to spare for the purpose.

Mrs. Rose is a sensible and very agreeable woman, and I love her husband; consequently we were happy in their company. But company that is indeed company, and that makes any alteration in our table necessary, is now too much for Mrs. Unwin—costs her more thought and contrivance than her poor head can bear.

You say not a word about coming, for which reason it is that I make you wait till the last moment before I tell you that Mrs. Unwin is as well as usual, and myself not worse. We love and

thank you, however, for your kind anxieties about us, and shall be happy to see you soon.

Adieu, my dearest Johnny. I have not time to add more, except that I am, with our united best remembrances to all friends, affectionately and most affectionately yours,

WILLIAM COWPER

8

March 3rd, 1793

MY DEAREST JOHNNY,

Are you so lately from the egg-shell as not yet to know that trustees are of all mankind the least to be trusted? I thought that you had had some experience of that truth in your own concerns already. I am afraid you have but one remedy, which is to hang these same trustees immediately. It may be an affair of some little difficulty, but it will be an act of consummate justice, and in the way to such an act all difficulties are to be disregarded. They will otherwise infallibly cheat you all by making a bargain with some needy rogue of a parson, and how can you prevent it?

You are a rogue yourself, though not yet a parson. Did not you tell me in your last letter but one, that in your next you would fix a time for coming to Weston, and behold here is not one word about it in all that you have said. Had you been here, I should for some time past have found you full employment in transcribing for me the alterations that I have made and am still making in my Homer, which alterations I shall publish at the same time with the new edition for the use and behoof of the purchasers of the first. I am very busy in this matter, correcting and improving with one hand, and making a fair copy of the improvements with the other, for the occasion is urgent, and I wish to finish the work as soon as possible, that my hands may be clear for Milton. I have made a second bargain with Johnson, still keeping the copyright in my own hands. The second edition is to be a small one, 750 copies only, for which he agrees to give me £200 clear of all deductions. This, indeed, was a measure of his own proposing, and I acceded to it the rather because, by the sale of this edition, I shall learn with more precision what price to ask for the copyright, should I choose to sell it hereafter. I have put an eternal stop to all engravings of my phiz, by choosing rather to accept the profits of a common edition of my poems, than to wait for those of a bedizened one. Portraits and vignettes and such fine things are slowly produced, and the stone-cutter at Olney might perhaps have been employed in cutting a stone for my sepulchral honour before I should have been one farthing the better for such a splendid project. I therefore chose the short road to emolument, and am now actually in possession of a part of what I might otherwise never have had.

This being the case, you may send for my picture from Abbott's when you please. It has been a spectacle long enough.

I thank you, my dear Johnny, for the turkey, which came safe, and will, I doubt not, prove a good one. It now hangs (I would that the Trustees last mentioned were hanging with it) in the Hall larder.

We are both tolerably well, and have been doing great things. Have bought a cow, and converted a useless coachhouse into a useful dairy. My study is likewise *going* to be much improved. Going where, you may ask. The expression, child, is idiomatic, and very good English, whatever you may think of it.

Adieu. With love to all, I remain yours,

WILLIAM COWPER

9

June 4th, 1793

MY DEAREST JOHNNY,

Not to make you wait, I will tell you at once that I have done my best. I have sent up your letter to Lady Hesketh, not knowing the Bishop of B.'s address myself. She will take care that your business shall want nothing to further it that she can do, and she can do with our cousin the Bishop all that can be done by anybody. I have advised her by all means to send him your letter to me as likely to be your best advocate with a person of his humane and gentle disposition.

Lay aside your anxiety; I have little doubt of your success. At any rate remember that you will be admitted into your sacred office exactly at the time and by the means that God's providence has appointed. I should have sent you a longer letter, in which I should have inserted a few lines addressed to yourself, had this day been less a busy one; but I shall now content myself with giving them to you in person. Adieu, with Mrs. Unwin's love and our united assurances that we shall rejoice to see you again.

I remain, my dear Johnny,

Ever yours,

WM. C.

10

Weston, June 7th, 1793

MY DEAREST JOHNNY,

I send you a short line merely to thank you for your kind and handsome present of a Norwich shawl, which we both admire, and which Mrs. Unwin will wear with particular pleasure for the donor's sake. Before we see you, I hope to receive some account . .

of the success of our application, either from Lady Hesketh, or possibly from the Bishop of B. himself, who is an old friend as well as cousin of mine; and, since he would be willing, I believe, to gratify me on all proper occasions, I see not why he should do otherwise on this. On all accounts I wish and hope a favourable event, and particularly because I shall be glad to have the mathematical bigots who triumph in your mortification, mortified themselves. I shall have two books of alterations for you to transcribe when you come. One I have transcribed myself since you went. You will have also a new gimcrack to copy into my book, consisting of I know not how many stanzas.

With our united best love and wishes for your good journey,

I remain, truly yours,

WM. COWPER

P.S.—The cheese came safe, and is excellent.

11

W. U., June 28th, 1793

MY DEAREST JOHNNY,

In the interval between Mrs. Unwin's walk and my own I take pen in hand, merely to tell you in few words that I have received no letter this many a day that has given me equal pleasure with that from yourself, and which arrived this morning. I told you, my man, that Providence would order the affair for you, and that you would find the door ecclesiastical opened to you exactly at the time and by the means that would be best for you; and so it proves. Now I see it to be well that Bristol would not comply; yet, though his non-compliance was evidently providential, that by no means excuses him. It was unfriendly to me, and by this time he probably knows that I account it so. I cannot tell you how much we both rejoice, not only at your accession to the void living, but likewise at the manner in which you get it; entreated to accept what all the young clergy, ay, and most of the old ones too, would go round the world to acquire. Nothing, in short, seems wanting in the whole affair, to make it the happiest event that could be, and may God but give you grace, as I trust he will, to exercise your new functions as becomes a Minister of his Gospel, your lot will be indeed a good one. Your entrance into the Church, your condition in it, and your performance of the duties it imposes on you, will be all honourable and such as will afford constant matter of thankfulness to yourself and to all who love you.

Mrs. Bodham's letter arrived here precisely at the worst time for a letter in haste to be delivered. It came on Saturday, consequently could not go hence till the next day, when I sent it directed to you at Caius.

I am truly sorry for her, and sympathize with her in all that she suffers on account of her husband's illness. I have lived a life of almost perpetual alarm on a similar account, and can for that reason the more feelingly apprehend what her distress must be.

Let me have as early an account as possible of the conclusion of all your matters, at least of your ordination, and believe me, with our united best remembrances,

Ever yours,
WM. COWPER

My love to the Bodhams, your sister, and all friends.

12

W. U., July 10th, 1793

MY DEAR AND REVD. JOHNNY,

Your letter which brought me the joyful news of your ordination reached me yesterday, and yesterday I intended to have answered it, but was hindered by the arrival of two gentlemen whom Mr. Greatheed, now at Buxton, has left to keep his house in his absence. At the peril of total dissolution they had come through a burning sun to see me, and I could do no less than give them all my attention.

I learn from Lady H. that you, in the abundance of your charity, not only apologize for the B. of Bristol, but judge that he did right to refuse you. So do not I. It was a trifle that we asked, and I still insist on it that he ought not to have said us nay; since, trifle as it was so far as he was concerned, to you it was of the last importance. I rejoice, however, that Norwich was more reasonable. What sort of a Bishop he may be in other respects I know not, but shall always honour him for the humanity he exercised in your case, which I expected and had reason to expect from my own cousin, but found not.

Tell me in your next when I shall see you again. I am at the end of the 22nd book. If there has * any hope that you will be here to transcribe for me when I have done, I will not transcribe for myself; otherwise, before I begin the Odyssey, I will finish the fair copy of the alterations and send away the "Iliad."

Homer is erected, and a noble figure he makes. The sun never shone hotter on his head, ἐν μέσῳ Ἀργεὸς ἵπποβάτοιο, than it does here to-day. Everybody admired him. I have doubts about a motto, whether any or none, and if any, whether a Greek one of two lines that I have made myself, or whether my own translation of τὸν περὶ Μοῦσ' ἐφίλησε, &c.

The intense heat is such that I can only add what you wish

* Sic; but query "is."

principally to know, that I am as well as usual, and Mrs. Unwin too, a rheumatic pain in her cheek excepted. Remember to get me a stock of paper.

Yours, my dear Johnny, affectionately,

WM. COWPER

Mrs. U. sends you her love and best wishes.

13

[October 23rd, 1793]

MY DEAREST JOHNNY,

The rumbling of your chaise was hardly out of my ears when I recollected that I had let you go without payment of what I owe you for good liquors and paper, and perhaps for twenty other matters. But Mr. Rose, I know, will have the goodness to settle the account for me, and pay himself again when any cash of mine comes into his hands.

Whether you have taken my penknife or not I have not yet learned, but you have left your own, a leaving which I admire the more, because you found yours, after having missed it, only the moment before you went. Adieu; let me hear from you as soon as you get to Dereham, and tell me all that passes between you and Johnson. Give my love to the whole fireside where you are, and believe me your affectionate

WILLIAM COWPER

October 23rd, 1793.

After Homer and before breakfast.

14

Weston Underwood, November 30th, 1793

MY DEAREST JOHNNY,

That I may begin my Sabbath pleasantly at least, though not so piously as yourself, I begin it with a letter to you. To pay a debt that has been long owing cannot be a bad deed on any day. Time was when on Sabbath mornings in winter I rose before day, and by the light of a lanthorn trudged with Mrs. Unwin, often through snow and rain, to a prayer meeting at the Great House, as they call it, near the church at Olney. There I always found assembled forty or fifty poor folks, who preferred a glimpse of the light of God's countenance and favour to the comforts of a warm bed, or to any comforts that the world could afford them; and there I have often myself partaken that blessing with them. If I live a different life now, it is not because I have found, or think that I have found, a better way of living, but because, for

reasons too long and too unpleasant to be enumerated here, I have been constrained to do so, God knows with how much sorrow and misery to myself on account of the loss of his presence which is better than life. I will not tell you how I lost it, and probably I never shall, and that merely because it would do you no good to know it, the story being absolutely incredible; but I know the truth of it, and have for twenty years suffered things not to be expressed, in consequence. The instruction, however, to be collected from it I will give you, and it is this. Never shut your eyes against a known duty, nor close your ears to an express providential call, however uncommon and even unprecedented it may be, and however difficult the service that it enjoins. Thus, my dear Johnny, without intending it when I began, I have preached to you, who are now preparing to preach to others. God help you to profit by the lesson which I am sure is a good one, and heal the wounds that I have incurred and long time languished under, because I neglected it! Amen.

It is of no consequence that you had not time to see Johnson, for Hayley has seen him, and conferred with him much to my satisfaction. Diverse matters, all very agreeable to me, were the subjects of it, but the most agreeable of all, in the result of it, was this new edition of Milton; on which subject I learn that the publication is postponed on account of the war, which leaves the world no leisure for literary amusements; Johnson accordingly thinks it would be too hazardous to send forth so expensive a work at present. I have therefore leisure, when Homer is finished, which will soon be the case, instead of acting the dull part of a commentator, to perform the poet's part, far pleasanter and more adapted to my natural propensity. You will not be displeased to learn that Lawrence's sketch of me is to be engraved by Bartolozzi, though for private use only, and that a new edition of my poems with embellishments by Lawrence is in contemplation.

You do kindly and like yourself to gratify your sister's preference of landed honours to vile cash, though your compliance is certainly an expensive one. Her pride in this instance is of a kind that I have no quarrel with.

Adieu. We are as well as usual. Lady Hesketh is here. Hers and Mrs. Unwin's best love attend you.

Yours ever,

WILLIAM COWPER

Give my love to your sister, whose likeness to my mother insures to her always my tenderest attachment, and my love to all friends. I hope you have by this time heard from Mr. Newton. I have nothing more to do with Homer now but to go over the last book of the Iliad with Clarke's notes, to write a new preface, and to transcribe the alterations.

LETTERS TO JOSEPH HILL

15

May 31st, 1777

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I received yesterday Mr. Child's note for £30, and return my best thanks for it.

I wish it had been possible to have sent you a riper fruit, but it is necessary to gather melons a day or two too soon when they are to be sent to a distance, else they would be as yellow as a gourd before they could be brought to table. Three days after I cut yours I sent the fellow to it to a neighbouring clergyman who gives me all my litter, and that was so ripe that it parted from the stalk. We have eat part of one to-day, of a different sort (the early Cantalupe), as high-flavoured a fruit as ever I tasted. I have a third sort to produce by-and-by, called the Black Rock, which I design you shall partake of, and for experiment's sake I will let it hang till it cracks.

If you can furnish me (I mean if Mrs. Hill can) at Michaelmas with any embellishments for my borders, I shall be obliged to her; a crocus in spring, a pink in summer, and a sunflower in autumn, is almost the *ne plus* of our gardens in this neighbourhood.

Yours affectionately,

WILLIAM COWPER

16

June 6th, 1778

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I am much obliged to you for your offer to advance the necessary sum upon this important occasion, but it is now summer time, and I should fear lest the wine might suffer by a journey in hot weather. My stock is not exhausted, and I can wait till Michaelmas. Nevertheless, as you gave me reason not long since to hope that you would receive near £20 more on my account, in the course of the summer, I shall be glad, should that be the case, to have it remitted to me; otherwise I should be in danger of being straitened.

Thurlow's advancement to the seals, I imagine, surprises nobody. I should formerly have conceived great pleasure from such an event, in which self would have its share. A certain provision for me would have been the consequence of his promotion. But "Damnosa

quid non imminuit dies?" It has worn out the graces of our former intimacy, and the sinecure he promised me must fill a happier pocket than mine.

Pray tell Mrs. Hill my *Mimulus ringens*, my flower fence, my wild olive, and silk cotton are all well and thriving. As to the rest, the day of their sowing was the day of their burial, and there they lie to this hour. If she is fond of carnations, I have some very good ones, and if she chooses any, and my layers succeed, I will send her some at the proper season, but they are stage flowers, and must be framed in winter.

Yours affectionately,
WILLIAM COWPER

It is impossible to say too much in praise of the mackerel.

17

Olney, March 4th, 1783

Received of Mr. Hill the fine cod, with oysters.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Having made this acknowledgment, I shall not find much time to add to it. The post sets out soon after breakfast, and it is now half-past ten.

You have relieved me from a good deal of anxiety by sending Elliott's medicines. I have been obliged to give my left eye a roasted apple every night lately, but the arrival of these more efficacious remedies will, I hope, make the troublesome application unnecessary.

I am reconciled to the peace—and despair of my country. The former would have been impossible had not the latter been unavoidable. A change of Ministry affords no hope. Where is the minister that can discharge our debt, eradicate corruption, and bind our generals to their duty? Till these ends are accomplished, whether we have peace or war, we are alike undone; more speedily perhaps by war, but by peace, by disadvantageous peace, as surely. How are we fallen since the year 60! The Governor of the Earth knows why, and in time the inhabitants of it shall know too.

A strolling player begged of me yesterday. He was once an assistant to Mr. Hobson of Clifford's Inn, and served a regular clerkship to an attorney. The hero's name is Trotter. If you know such a man as Hobson and have at any time occasion to converse with him, you may tell him that poor Tom is starving, with a wife,

five children, and a sixth just going to make his entrance upon the stage. Had we not relieved him he and his family must have eaten snowballs or have fasted.

Yours, my dear friend,
WILLIAM COWPER

18

February 4th, 1784

Received of Mr. Hill the sum of Thirty pounds by Draft upon Messrs. Child and Co.

WILLIAM COWPER

£30 0s. 0d.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I received the books, have read, and returned them by this morning's diligence. I found the author, for so well informed a man, the dullest writer I remembered having encountered. Perhaps the fault may be in the country he visited; if so, it was hardly worth while to seek it. His journey through Spain amused me most; which makes me think that had he directed his course a different way, I should have been better pleased with his recital. This piece of wisdom at least he has taught me, that while there are villages and hamlets to be seen in England, which I have never yet made an acquaintance with, it will be by no means advisable to run to Sicily in quest of villages and hamlets.

I made Lady Austen laugh at your remark upon settlements. She is charmed that whatever affairs of hers may hereafter stand in need of a lawyer will be placed in the hands of one who understands the ladies so well, and begs me to make you her compliments upon the occasion.

Alas poor King! and alas poor country! Questions that can never be decided, because upon subjects equally interesting to both parties, will prove but indifferent sport for a nation that has so much need of concord. Human affairs are a tragedy seen on one side, and a comedy on the other.* It is tragical to see a great nation sinking into ruin, but when we consider the gravity with which its managers affect to mean one thing when in reality they mean another, the subject becomes almost ridiculous. For I take it *pro concessio* that the good of the country is but little in the contemplation of either party. But surely, of all follies, that of an English monarch who at this time of day has need to be taught the true limits of his prerogative and the danger of exceeding them, is

* It is curious to find Cowper, the least like Horace Walpole of all men, making quite independently the most quoted of all Walpole's remarks.

the greatest. It is so unaccountable that nothing but the old adage, "Quos Jupiter vult perdere, dementat prius," is sufficient to explain it.

My affectionate respects to Mrs. Hill. I will trouble her no further upon the subject of books, till I see one advertised with a title that awakens all my curiosity to a degree not to be resisted.

Yours, my dear friend,

WILLIAM COWPER

19

Olney, May 24th, 1784

Received of Mr. Hill the sum of Thirty pounds by Draft on Child & Co.

WILLIAM COWPER

£30 0s. 0d.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I pity the man of business that has to do with me. He may account himself happy indeed if he understands me, who upon all such occasions have but a very imperfect understanding of myself. *Pour comble de malheur*, my paper is so greasy that I am obliged to paint my letters.

There is no suit in question, for there is nothing in litigation between the parties, at least at present. The matter is this. Immediately after her father's death, Lady Austen went to France. Before she set off, the Ryder who is now the acting man presented her with a letter of attorney, which he designed should invest him with plenary powers to manage all her affairs in her absence. Not liking the man and having suspicions of his character, she refused to sign it, an affront which he has resented with no small degree of malignancy ever since. Accordingly, as often as the final settlement of the account is mentioned, he threatens her that it shall be done in Chancery. The sound of that word alarms a lady who has already waited ten years for her fortune, and would be sorry to wait ten more. I had not skill enough to warrant me in giving an answer to her fears. My question therefore to you was, or meant to be, this. Can Ryder throw the business into Chancery in order to get the accounts referred to a Master, without her consent, merely with a view to keep her out of possession as long as possible? If it be possible for him to play off such a manœuvre, is it not also possible to prevent it, and by what means can that be done? I did not know, for my own part, whether he might not obtain such a reference upon petition, though there were no suit depending, but you can resolve me. If he cannot, then he only holds this language with a design to distress and intimidate. Lady Austen is at present

at Bath, but I shall communicate your answer to her as soon as I receive it.

You have had a pleasant trip this delightful season, but indeed a very short one. You seem to emerge for a few moments out of the tide of business, which immediately absorbs you again, like a fish that takes a frisk into the air in a fine evening, and relapses into its element in an instant. Fare you well. My best respects wait on Mrs. Hill, and I am your truly affectionate

WILLIAM COWPER

20

*September 11th, 1784 **

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Lady Austen having been obliged to go to Bath was at that place when I received your last. She has since resolved to make it her abode, and return no more to Olney. I have, however, by her particular desire, sent her your address, and when she has need of your assistance you will hear from her.

I am sorry that we are to see no more of your good old friend Mr. Small. He wrote me word some time ago that his nephew had taken his affairs into his own hands, and that he should therefore have no future calls to Clifton. He enclosed some seed of the rhubarb plant, which I attempted to raise in vain.

This fine September is making us amends for a most wintry June, July, and August. Several times in the course of this week my thermometer has been at 79 and 80, a degree of heat uncommon at this late season. If the harvest on your side of the county † has fared as well as on ours, your farmers have no reason to complain. The weight of the crops, of the wheat especially, is prodigiously beyond what is usual, and not a grain of it grown. It is to be hoped, therefore, that in the course of the winter the poor will be able to afford the expense of bread, though at present the price of it is not fallen. No man is less skilled in market mystery than I, but to a person as ignorant as myself it seems as if nothing but the most iniquitous management could contrive to plague a country with the effects of a dearth when it is in fact overloaded with abundance. I think if the Emperor reigned here bread would be cheaper.

I have never seen Dr. Cotton's book concerning which your sisters questioned me, nor till you mentioned it did I know that he had published anything newer than his Visions. I have no doubt that it is so far worthy of him as to be pious and sensible, and I believe that no man living is better qualified to write on such

* The last paragraph of this letter has been already printed.

† *Sic*, but query "country?"

subjects as his title seems to announce. Some years have passed since I heard from him, and considering his great age it is probable that I shall hear from him no more, but I shall always respect him. He is truly a philosopher according to my judgment of the character, every tittle of his knowledge in natural subjects being connected in his mind with the firm belief of an omnipotent agent.

My respects attend Mrs. Hill, your mother and your sisters.

Yours, my friend, affectionately,

WILLIAM COWPER

21

Weston Underwood, near Olney,

December 21st, 1786

MY DEAR FRIEND,

"Ecce iterum Crispinus!" and upon the same errand. Carpenters, masons, and smiths are expensive servants. Mrs. Unwin expected money that she will not receive, and my dependence is upon you. You have more than once helped me out at a plunge, and will I doubt not now. Nothing less than an order for the remaining arrears of my annual revenue will satisfy my occasions, and you will much oblige me by favouring me with such an order immediately, for I never incur debts to anybody but yourself.

My best respects attend Mrs. Hill.

Yours affectionately,

WILLIAM COWPER

22

January 1st, 1787

Received of Joseph Hill, Esq., the sum of Thirty pounds by Draft on Child & Co. by

WILLIAM COWPER

£30 0s. 0d.

Weston Underwood, nr. Olney, Bucks

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Your letter dated the 23rd December did not reach me till this day, the 1st January, having been a whole week on its travels no mortal knows whither, owing to a direction rather too laconic. It reached me at last by the cross post from Stratford. I thank you heartily for the contents and for your friendly offer in the close of it, but hope to have no occasion to encroach any further on your

kindness now. That beast of a Frog, what must we do with him? He is Welsh, I suppose, by his name, and I have no great opinion of the descendants of Cadwallader. I wish he would pay me my rent and go back to his mountains.

My friend, may all happiness attend you and yours, which is from my heart the sincere New Year's wish of

Your affectionate,
WILLIAM COWPER

23

Weston Underwood, January 27th, 1788

MY DEAR FRIEND,

In hope that my finances are able to bear it, and necessity enforcing the measure, I shall take the liberty to draw on you to-morrow for Forty pounds, the draft payable at sight to John Higgins, Esq., or order.

Lady Hesketh in her last letter mentioned your having lately had a fit of the gout. I will not congratulate you on an acquisition not very desirable perhaps in any case to him who makes it, but your friends, and among them myself in particular, I *will* congratulate, because it seems to promise us that we shall keep you long. Wishing you a short and slight visit from this rough intruder as often as he shall return, and at the same time all possible benefit from his attendance, I remain, with my best respect to Mrs. Hill,

Yours, my dear friend, affectionately,
WILLIAM COWPER

P.S.—Many thanks for a barrel of fine oysters.

24

Weston, October 25th, 1788

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I am much obliged to you for taking the necessary measures to extort payment from the insolvent Welshman. Frog I will not call him, because that is the name by which I call my valuable friends and neighbours the Throckmortons, for brevity's sake, as you will suppose.

Nothing can be more picturesque than your description of Wargrave, nor consequently more beautiful than the subject of it. And I would that I were at liberty for an excursion which I know I should find so perfectly agreeable, and to which I have every inducement. But Homer, Homer, Homer, is my eternal answer to all invitations to a distance, and must be so long as I have that

great stone to roll before me wherever I go. It will, I hope, not prove like that of Sisyphus. To Blithfield, to Bath, to Normandy, have I been bidden, and by friends whom I much love, but am forced to make the same reply to all.

The witness of my writing this agreeable billet to Mr. Morgan is my friend Mr. Rose of Rathbone Place, a young gentleman now engaged in the study of the law under the auspices of a Special Pleader whose name I think is Praed. He is at present with me, and because I know he will please you, I will, with your permission, recommend it to him to pay his respects to you next winter in Great Queen Street.

My love and Lady Hesketh's love attend Mrs. Hill and your sisters, of whose health I rejoice to hear, and heartily wish them a continuance of the present delightful weather, that they may have the most perfect enjoyment of the beauties of Wargrave.

Yours, my dear friend, most truly,

WILLIAM COWPER

Weston Underwood, November 15th, 1788

MY DEAR FRIEND,

That you may have the satisfaction to know that your kind present suffered no unnecessary delay in its journey hither, I give you the earliest information possible of its safe arrival, together with many thanks for it. The turkey has been already an object of our joint admiration though in his feathers, and will I doubt not excite still more when we shall see him in *querpo*. He does great credit to Mrs. Hill's management, insomuch that I know not if she have not brought upon herself some trouble of which perhaps she will hear news ere long, but, knowing that Lady Hesketh intends shortly to write to her, I forbear to mention it. It will serve in the mean time to employ conjecture. I beg you will present her with my best respects, and with two-thirds of my thankful acknowledgments on the occasion, taking the remainder to yourself. We were fortunate in receiving your letter so early. Mr. Throckmorton's servant, happening to go to Newport for his master's letters, brought mine too; yours, otherwise, would not have reached me till the next day, for we have not a daily post.

We are kept, as they say, in hot water concerning the poor King, but the last accounts having been the most favourable encourage a hope that the important question of his life or death will soon be decided to our wish. Should he die, the best thing the Ministry, or rather the Parliament, can do, will be to advertise for a successor, for it does not presently occur where we shall find a worthy one.

I have been somewhat alarmed lately for Mr. Chester, who I hear has a carbuncle on his back; a very painful, and which is worse, a dangerous distemper, especially to a man like him, not qualified by great strength of constitution to contend with it. He spent the summer at Harrogate, as the King at Cheltenham. If such be the consequences of water-drinking, let us abstain from all such perilous beverage and drink wine.

Lady Hesketh adds her best compliments to mine both to yourself and Mrs. Hill.

Believe me, my dear friend,

Most sincerely yours,

WILLIAM COWPER

26

[December 16th, 1788]

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I write you yet once again to give you notice of a draft payable to John Higgins, Esq., or order for Thirty pounds, and dated yesterday. My Bank, I should hope, is by this time somewhat replenished, and in condition to answer the demand.

I have many acknowledgments to make you for your kind reception of Mr. Rose. I consider him as my proxy at your house, and all your favours to him as conferred on myself. At Christmas I hope to have his company for a week. He is a great walker, in which respect he suits me well, for while the cold weather lasts I am a great walker too.

There seems to be a reasonable hope, judging by the opinion of the faculty, that the King's malady may prove an affair of no long continuance. He will be somewhat astonished, when he shall be capable of learning it, to find at what a rate some persons have driven during his derangement; and the longer his disorder lasts the more danger there will be of a relapse in consequence of such discovery, for they seem to lose no opportunity of saying and doing everything that would go near to turn the head of any king, even of one whose head had never received a twirl before. No man wishes him well more warmly than myself, but I much fear that, be the event of his indisposition what it may, he has seen his happiest days, sensible as he must be if he live to be sensible of anything—

How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
To have an heir like his.

Lady Hesketh had last night a cold, and was a little feverish; I have not heard of her this morning, but hope soon to learn from herself that she is better. If she knew that I am writing,

she would say, remember me to them both, which thus doing, and adding my own best respects to Mrs. Hill, together with compliments from the two turkeys, who are both in perfect health,

I remain, my dear friend,
Affectionately yours,
WILLIAM COWPER

27

Weston Underwood, April 14th, 1789

MY DEAR FRIEND,

My cellar being nearly exhausted, I shall soon find it expedient to import a hogshead of wine from Lynn, in which way of proceeding I supply myself much more advantageously than by hampers from London. Other articles of expense also threaten me at this season, and make it necessary for me to beg that you will be so kind as to send me a draft on your Banker for as much of my yearly revenue as you expect yet to receive.

Lady Hesketh has communicated to me what you told her on the subject of Mr. Archdeacon Haslop. He is a strange man, and one would think, with all the fuss he has made about it, wants less his money than an opportunity to be troublesome. I thank you, however, for the care you have taken of me in this particular by quieting my apprehensions on his account. So long as I have you at my back I fear him not, or if I fear him at all, it is only as a visitor; even you cannot prevent his coming hither if he chooses it, and he has so managed for me that I feel it would be safest and best both for him and for me that we should settle our accounts at a distance.

With my best respects to Mrs. Hill,

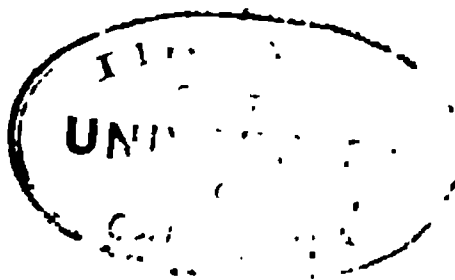
I remain, my dear friend,
Sincerely yours,
WILLIAM COWPER

28

Weston Underwood, December 14th, 1789

MY DEAR FRIEND,

It is a shame that I should never write to you but for the needful. The truth is, I write very few letters indeed that are not extorted from me by necessity. When I shall have fought all my Trojan battles, and have given Ulysses quiet possession of his own goods and chattels again, then I shall become a more reasonable correspondent.



I hope you have paid yourself out of stock the amount of my last draft, my income not being adequate to such demands and to the supply of my necessities also. Those necessities oblige me to beg a further supply at present, which I shall be happy to receive per first opportunity.

Our Grand Signor has produced—or rather his Sultanas—two families, the last so late in the season that we despaired of them. But they are now thriving Turks. Among the youngest are two perfectly white ; if Mrs. Hill (to whom I beg my best compliments) has any wish for such, Mrs. Unwin will send them in the spring. They are now unequal to the journey.

I am, my dear friend,

Ever yours,

WILLIAM COWPER

Many thanks for a barrel of oysters received some time since.

*August 7th, 1790 **

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I feel considerably lighter in my spirit, as in fact in my purse, since it is in my power to satisfy the demands of Mr. Archdeacon, and devoutly wish that I may never have to deal with another like him. I shall this moment send him the joyful news that my money is at his service.

I feel myself in such perfect good humour that I cannot just now quarrel with anybody, especially with your supposition that I might possibly be drawn to Wargrave by a desire of seeing your guests, though yourself have no such attractions for me. Were it possible that I could visit you at all, for your own sake should I come and for no other sake that can be mentioned. But you must understand that I have not slept from home these nineteen years, and that I despair of being ever able to do it more. This is the effect of a cause with which I will not darken a letter that I have begun in good spirits. But if you are inclined to suspicions and surmises of duplicity, what do you think must mine be, who learn from yourself that you have been in the north and have returned to the south, that is to say, that you have twice passed my door without giving me so much as a call? Had I journeyed within little more than two miles of Wargrave and had served, you so, it would have cost me much ingenuity to have exculpated myself from a charge

* A few illegible words in this letter have been omitted.

at least of indifference, and I am curious to know which way even you will turn yourself to get rid of it.

My dear Sephus, if you and Mrs. Hill would come and spend part of your holidays with us, or the whole, either this year or the next, I would convince you in person with how much simplicity and sincerity I give you the invitation now ; for I know nothing that would give me greater pleasure than to see you ; but whatever you do, never pass me more. With my best respects to Mrs. Hill,

I am ever yours,

WILLIAM COWPER

Weston Underwood, September 4th, 1790

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Felicitate me on an event in which I know you have interested yourself much and long. My Homer is finished, goes to London on Wednesday, and in a few days will be in the press. It will not be long before I shall make my bargain with Johnson for the copy, and then once in my life I shall have money with which to purchase stock instead of selling it, shall even purchase more than I have sold out these many years. Necessities that have no other cure oblige me at present to apply to you for the sale of another hundred, and that as soon as possible. You will oblige me much if you will issue your directions to your agents in town accordingly. The letter of attorney that I executed lately in the Arch-deacon's business will I presume empower them to obey you.

I had a letter the other day from Lady Hesketh full of the beauties of Wargrave and of the hospitable and kind reception she found there. May you and Mrs. Hill have long life and long health to enjoy them ! The week after next we expect to see my cousin at Weston ; she comes to spend the autumn with us and I hope a good part of the winter.

If your sisters are with you I beg you will present my affectionate remembrances to them, and tell them I have a sincere pleasure in thinking that my labour of five years will soon be spread before them. With my best compliments to Mrs. Hill,

I remain, my dear friend,

Truly yours,

WILLIAM COWPER

September 30th, 1790

Received of Joseph Hill, Esq., the sum of Seventeen pounds twelve shillings and sixpence by draft on Child & Co. by me,

WILLIAM COWPER

£17 12s. 6d.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Many thanks for the remittance above specified, and for the treatise on planting which my cousin delivered to me this morning as a gift from you. An acceptable one as well because you are the donor as for the sake of the subject; not that I plant much myself, for an obvious reason, but because I am everything in theory that I have an opportunity to be, and shall therefore find pleasure in studying it, and because I have a good neighbour in Mr. Throckmorton who delights much both in his garden and plantations, and will consequently be glad of the information he may collect from it.

My cousin arrived yesterday evening in perfect health and spirits; her best compliments attend yourself and Mrs. Hill, and she bids me tell you beside how sorry she was that she could not possibly accept your kind invitation. I began to be out of patience that she stayed so long at Lady Fane's, for twice she postponed her coming, but her arrival at last has made amends for all.

The world rings with the gaieties of your neighbourhood, to which ours is a perfect contrast. Here we have no company but each other's, and all the little noise we hear is made by ourselves.

With my best respects to Mrs. Hill,

I remain, my dear friend,

Most truly yours,

WILLIAM COWPER

Weston, December 11th, 1790

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Presuming that by this time there are means of supply in my budget, I beg the remittance of £50 by a draft as usual.

I see you in the papers appointed Clerk of the Peace for your county. I know neither the quantum of emolument nor the business of your office, but you do, and since you deemed it worth your having, I heartily give you the joy of it.

You have heard, I presume, that I am in the press; the intelligence is true. It groans every day with my labours, and will continue groaning for some months to come. I expect to be born in

April. This moment I receive a sheet, part of the last half of the 8th Iliad, and am, if possible, now more occupied than ever, retouching for the last time before it meets the public eye my long translation. I flatter myself that I have not bestowed such unremitting study on it in vain, but that in the end these two great volumes will do me credit, and then I know you will rejoice with me.

Lady Hesketh is in the best health and spirits, and presents her best compliments to yourself and Mrs. Hill, in which she is most sincerely joined by

Yours ever,

WILLIAM COWPER

33

Weston Underwood, April 6th, 1791

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Many thanks for your early information. I send you as speedily a short line in return, merely to assure you that I did not boast of more philosophical fortitude than I really possess, but am as easy and as well contented with my lean purse as ever. I have heard vulgar people say "no butter will stick upon my bread," an adage which, when I review the past, vulgar as it is, I feel myself ready to adopt; but I will not at present adopt it, in hopes that Homer may yet butter a crust or two for me before I die.

With my love to Mrs. Hill and your sisters,

I remain ever yours,

WILLIAM COWPER

My intelligence was not from Lady H., but from General Cowper.

34

Weston, July 12th, 1791

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I learned from a paper of yours enclosed in a letter from Lady Hesketh (and had indeed learnt it before from Mr. Rose) how much I am obliged to you for your friendly interference in this bargain-making business with Johnson. He stands so fair in the opinion of some who have known him longer than I, not only as an honest bookseller, but as a liberal one, that I did well hope for such an offer from him as would save both me and my friends all trouble. But his first offer was such as, considering what he has done in other instances, I hardly know how to account for. At least if it be true, as I have good reason to believe it is, that he gave Dr. Darwin eight hundred pounds for his "Loves of the Plants," then it seems

strange that he should propose to get my Homer for nothing; for to pay me for the copyright with my own money will certainly bear no other interpretation. His second offer, however, has made me amends, and I am well content with it. The last was an anxious week with me, not only for the pecuniary interest that I had at stake, but because I was desirous also to obtain such terms as might not disgrace me in the ears of the curious who shall hereafter inquire what I gained by my labours. It was irksome to me likewise to feel myself on the edge of a quarrel with a man who has not corresponded with me merely as a trader in my commodity, but familiarly and almost as a friend. These weighty considerations, added to the still more weighty cares that I felt for the success of my work with the public, were almost too much for me. I have great cause therefore to be thankful both to you and to the Rose, who have relieved me from so great a part of my burden, and have brought this affair to an issue honourable, and therefore perfectly satisfactory, to me.

I have nothing to do now but to wait as quietly as I can for the opinion of my readers, and have the better hope of success, being conscious of having neglected nothing that might ensure it.

With my best compliments to Mrs. Hill,

I remain, my dear friend,

Most sincerely yours,

WILLIAM COWPER

35

Weston Underwood, July 15th, 1792

Received of Joseph Hill, Esq., the sum of Thirty pounds by Draft on Child & Co.

WILLIAM COWPER

£30 0s. 0d.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

The earliest opportunity that I can take to thank you for the above happens to be a very short one. I am just going to electrify Mrs. Unwin, which done, I must take a short walk and dine.

Stock is at a high price, and there seems to be a glorious golden opportunity for selling out my remaining hundred. Once again I exhort you to this measure, and to appropriate the produce to payment of my arrears to yourself of such long standing. The high price that it bears has been likewise a reason with me to leave in Johnson's hands the money he owes me, for which he agrees to give me five per cent.

I wait with trembling ears for the news from Paris. The crisis

is terrible, and the upshot most important. As a well-wisher to mankind, I cannot but wish the affairs of that miserably distracted country settled, and am happy in the hope that it will not be in the power of any malcontents fatally to disturb our own. I signed an Address the other day from this county, which is all the little that poor I can do toward prolonging our tranquillity.

Mrs. Unwin recovers very gradually, and sends her compliments. Mine join them to yourself and Mrs. Hill, and I am most sincerely yours,

WILLIAM COWPER

POEMS BY WILLIAM COWPER

EARLY POEMS

VERSES

WRITTEN AT BATH, ON FINDING THE HEEL OF A SHOE, IN 1748

FORTUNE ! I thank thee : gentle Goddess, thanks !
Not that my Muse, though bashful, shall deny
She would have thanked thee rather hadst thou cast
A treasure in her way ; for neither meed
Of early breakfast, to dispel the fumes
And bowel-racking pains of emptiness,
Nor noontide feast, nor evening's cool repast,
Hopes she from this, presumptuous,—though perhaps
The cobbler, leather-carving artist, might.
Nathless she thanks thee, and accepts thy boon,
Whatever ; not as erst the fabled cock,
Vain-glorious fool, unknowing what he found,
Spurned the rich gem thou gavest him. Wherefore, ah !
Why not on me that favour (worthier sure !)
Conferredst thou, Goddess ? Thou art blind, thou say'st :
Enough ! thy blindness shall excuse the deed.

Nor does my Muse no benefit exhale
From this thy scant indulgence ;—even here,
Hints, worthy sage philosophy, are found,
Illustrious hints, to moralize my song.
This ponderous heel of perforated hide
Compact, with pegs indented many a row,
Haply (for such its massy form bespeaks)
The weighty tread of some rude peasant clown
Upbore : on this supported oft he stretched,
With uncouth strides, along the furrowed glebe,
Flattening the stubborn clod, till cruel time,
(What will not cruel time ?) on a wry step,
Severed the strict cohesion ; when, alas !
He, who could erst with even equal pace

WILLIAM COWPER

Pursue his destined way with symmetry
 And some proportion formed, now on one side,
 Curtailed and maimed, the sport of vagrant boys,
 Cursing his frail supporter, treacherous prop !
 With toilsome step and difficult, moves on.
 Thus fares it oft with other than the feet
 Of humble villager : the statesman thus,
 Up the steep road where proud ambition leads,
 Aspiring, first uninterrupted winds
 His prosperous way ; nor fears miscarriage foul,
 While policy prevails and friends prove true :
 But that support soon failing, by him left
 On whom he most depended,—basely left,
 Betrayed, deserted,—from his airy height
 Headlong he falls, and through the rest of life
 Drags the dull load of disappointment on.

AN ATTEMPT AT THE MANNER OF WALLER

DID not thy reason and thy sense,
 With most persuasive eloquence,
 Convince me that obedience due
 None may so justly claim as you,
 By right of beauty you would be
 Mistress o'er my heart and me.

Then fear not I should e'er rebel,
 My gentle love ! I might as well
 A forward peevishness put on,
 And quarrel with the mid-day sun ;
 Or question who gave him a right
 To be so fiery and so bright.

Nay, this were less absurd and vain
 Than disobedience to thy reign ;
 His beams are often too severe ;
 But thou art mild as thou art fair ;
 First from necessity we own your sway,
 Then scorn our freedom, and by choice obey.

Drayton, March 1753.

A SONG

THE sparkling eye, the mantling cheek,
 The polished front, the snowy neck,
 How seldom we behold in one !

Glassy locks, and brow serene,
 Venus' smiles, Diana's mien,
 All meet in you, and you alone.

Beauty, like other powers, maintains
 Her empire, and by *union* reigns ;
 Each single feature faintly warms :
 But where at once we view displayed
 Unblemished grace, the perfect maid
 Our eyes, our ears, our heart alarms.

So when on earth the god of day
 Obliquely sheds his tempered ray,
 Through convex orbs the beams transmit.
 The beams that gently warmed before,
 Collected, gently warm no more,
 But glow with more prevailing heat.

A SONG

On the green margin of the brook
 Despairing Phyllida reclined,
 Whilst every sigh and every look
 Declared the anguish of her mind.

"Am I less lovely then?" (she cries,
 And in the waves her form surveyed ;)
 "Oh yes, I see my languid eyes,
 My faded cheek, my colour fled :
 These eyes no more like lightning pierced,
 These cheeks grew pale, when Damon first
 His Phyllida betrayed.

"The rose he in his bosom wore,
 How oft upon my breast was seen !
 And when I kissed the drooping flower,
 'Behold,' he cried, 'it blooms again !
 The wreaths that bound my braided hair
 Himself next day was proud to wear
 At church, or on the green."

While thus sad Phyllida lamented,
 Chance brought unlucky Thyrsis on ;
 Unwillingly the nymph consented,
 But Damon first the cheat begun.
 She wiped the fallen tears away,
 Then sighed and blushed, as who should say,
 "Ah ! Thyrsis, I am won."

WILLIAM COWPER

A SONG

No more shall hapless Celia's ears
 Be fluttered with the cries
 Of lovers drowned in floods of tears
 Or murdered by her eyes ;
 No serenades to break her rest,
 Nor songs her slumbers to molest,
 With my fa, la, la.

The fragrant flowers that once would bloom
 And flourish in her hair,
 Since she no longer breathes perfume
 Their odours to repair,
 Must fade, alas ! and wither now,
 As placed on any common brow,
 With my fa, la, la.

Her lip, so winning and so meek,
 No longer has its charms ;
 As well she might by whistling seek
 To lure us to her arms ;
 Affected once, 'tis real now,
 As her forsaken gums may show,
 With my fa, la, la.

The down that on her chin so smooth,
 So lovely once appeared,
 That, too, has left her with her youth,
 Or sprouts into a beard ;
 As fields, so green when newly sown,
 With stubble stiff are overgrown,
 With my fa, la, la.

Then, Celia, leave your apish tricks,
 And change your girlish airs
 For ombre, snuff, and politics,
 Those joys that suit your years ;
 No patches can lost youth recall,
 Nor whitewash prop a tumbling wall,
 With my fa, la, la.

UPON A VENERABLE RIVAL

FULL thirty frosts since thou wert young
Have chilled the withered grove,
Thou wretch ! and hast thou lived so long,
Nor yet forgot to love ?

Ye Sages ! spite of your pretences
To wisdom, you must own
Your folly frequently commences
When you acknowledge none.

Not that I deem it weak to love,
Or folly to admire ;
But ah ! the pangs we lovers prove
Far other years require.

Unheeded on the youthful brow
The beams of Phœbus play ;
But unsupported Age stoops low
Beneath the sultry ray.

For once, then, if untutored youth,
Youth unapproved by years,
May chance to deviate into truth,
When your experience errs ;

For once attempt not to despise
What I esteem a rule :
Who early loves, though young, is wise,—
Who old, though grey, a fool.

AN ODE

ON READING MR. RICHARDSON'S HISTORY OF SIR CHARLES GRANDISON

SAY, ye apostate and profane,
Wretches who blush not to disdain
Allegiance to your God,
Did e'er your idly-wasted love
Of virtue for her sake remove
And lift you from the crowd ?

WILLIAM COWPER

Would you the race of glory run?
 Know, the devout, and they alone,
 Are equal to the task :
 The labours of the illustrious course
 Far other than the unaided force
 Of human vigour ask,

To arm against repeated ill
 The patient heart, too brave to feel
 The tortures of despair ;
 Nor safer yet high-crested pride,
 When wealth flows in with every tide
 To gain admittance there.

To rescue from the tyrant's sword
 The oppressed ; unseen and unimplored,
 To cheer the face of woe ;
 From lawless insult to defend
 An orphan's right, a fallen friend,
 And a forgiven foe ;

These, these distinguish from the crowd,
 And these alone, the great and good,
 The guardians of mankind ;
 Whose bosoms with these virtues heave,
 Oh, with what matchless speed they leave
 The multitude behind !

Then ask ye, from what cause on earth
 Virtues like these derive their birth ?
 Derived from Heaven alone,
 Full on that favoured breast they shine,
 Where faith and resignation join
 To call the blessing down.

Such is that heart ;—but while the Muse
 Thy theme, O Richardson, pursues,
 Her feebler spirits faint ;
 She cannot reach, and would not wrong,
 That subject for an angel's song,
 The hero, and the saint !

IN A LETTER TO C. P., Esq.

ILL WITH THE RHEUMATISM

GRANT me the Muse, ye gods ! whose humble flight
 Seeks not the mountain-top's pernicious height ;
 Who can the tall Parnassian cliff forsake
 To visit oft the still Lethean lake ;
 Now her slow pinions brush the silent shore,
 Now gently skim the unwrinkled waters o'er,
 There dips her downy plumes, there upward flies,
 And sheds soft slumbers on her votary's eyes.

IN A LETTER TO THE SAME

IN IMITATION OF SHAKESPEARE

TRUST me, the meed of praise, dealt thriftily
 From the nice scale of judgment, honours more
 Than does the lavish and o'erbearing tide
 Of profuse courtesy. Not all the gems
 Of India's richest soil at random spread
 O'er the gay vesture of some glittering dame
 Give such alluring vantage to the person,
 As the scant lustre of a few with choice
 And comely guise of ornament disposed

ODE

SUPPOSED TO BE WRITTEN ON THE MARRIAGE OF A FRIEND

THOU magic lyre, whose fascinating sound
 Seduced the savage monsters from their cave,
 Drew rocks and trees and forms uncouth around,
 And bade wild Hebrus hush his listening wave ;
 No more thy undulating warblings flow
 O'er Thracian wilds of everlasting snow !

Awake to sweeter sounds, thou magic lyre,
 And paint a lover's bliss—a lover's pain !
 Far nobler triumphs now thy notes inspire,
 For see, Eurydice attends thy strain ;
 Her smile, a prize beyond the conjurer's aim,
 Superior to the cancelled breath of fame.

WILLIAM COWPER

From her sweet brow to chase the gloom of care,
 To check the tear that dims the beaming eye,
 To bid her heart the rising sigh forbear,
 And flush her orient cheek with brighter joy,
 In that dear breast soft sympathy to move,
 And touch the springs of rapture and of love.

Ah me! how long bewildered and astray,
 Lost and benighted, did my footsteps rove,
 Till sent by Heaven to cheer my pathless way,
 A star arose—the radiant star of love.
 The God propitious joined our willing hands,
 And Hymen wreathed us in his rosy bands.

Yet not the beaming eye, or placid brow,
 Or golden tresses, hid the subtle dart;
 To charms superior far than those I bow,
 And nobler worth enslaves my vanquished heart;
 The beauty, elegance, and grace combined,
 Which beam transcendent from that angel mind.

While vulgar passions, meteors of a day,
 Expire before the chilling blasts of age,
 Our holy flame with pure and steady ray
 Its glooms shall brighten, and its pangs assuage;
 By Virtue (sacred vestal) fed, shall shine,
 And warm our fainting souls with energy divine.

AN EPISTLE TO ROBERT LLOYD, Esq.

'Tis not that I design to rob
 Thee of thy birthright, gentle Bob,
 For thou art born sole heir and single
 Of dear Mat Prior's easy jingle;
 Nor that I mean, while thus I knit
 My threadbare sentiments together,
 To show my genius or my wit,
 When God and you know I have neither;
 Or such, as might be better shown
 By letting poetry alone.
 'Tis not with either of these views
 That I presume to address the Muse:
 But to divert a fierce banditti
 (Sworn foes to every thing that's witty)

That, with a black infernal train,
Make cruel inroads in my brain,
And daily threaten to drive thence
My little garrison of sense :
The fierce banditti which I mean,
Are gloomy thoughts led on by spleen.
Then there's another reason yet,
Which is, that I may fairly quit
The debt which justly became due
The moment when I heard from you :
And you might grumble, crony mine,
If paid in any other coin ;
Since twenty sheets of lead, God knows,
(I would say twenty sheets of prose,)
Can ne'er be deemed worth half so much
As one of gold, and yours was such.
Thus the preliminaries settled,
I fairly find myself pitch-kettled ;
And cannot see, though few see better,
How I shall hammer out a letter.

First, for a thought—since all agree—
A thought—I have it—let me see—
'Tis gone again—plague on't ! I thought
I had it—but I have it not.
Dame Gurton thus, and Hodge her son,
That useful thing, her needle, gone,
Rake well the cinders, sweep the floor,
And sift the dust behind the door ;
While eager Hodge beholds the prize
In old grimalkin's glaring eyes ;
And Gammer finds it on her knees
In every shining straw she sees.
This simile were apt enough ;
But I've another, critic-proof.
The virtuoso thus at noon
Broiling beneath a July sun,
The gilded butterfly pursues
O'er hedge and ditch, through gaps and mews,
And, after many a vain essay,
To captivate the tempting prey,
Gives him at length the lucky pat,
And has him safe beneath his hat :
Then lifts it gently from the ground ;
But ah ! 'tis lost as soon as found ;
Culprit his liberty regains ;
Flits out of sight and mocks his pains.
The sense was dark, 'twas therefore fit

With simile to illustrate it ;
 But, as too much obscures the sight,
 As often as too little light,
 We have our similes cut short,
 For matters of more grave import.
 That Matthew's numbers run with ease
 Each man of common sense agrees ;
 All men of common sense allow
 That Robert's lines are easy too ;
 Where then the preference shall we place,
 Or how do justice in this case ?
 " Matthew," says Fame, " with endless pains
 Smoothed and refined the meanest strains,
 Nor suffered one ill-chosen rhyme
 To escape him at the idlest time ;
 And thus o'er all a lustre cast,
 That while the language lives shall last."
 " An't please your ladyship," quoth I,
 (For 'tis my business to reply,)
 " Sure so much labour, so much toil,
 Bespeak at least a stubborn soil.
 Theirs be the laurel-wreath decreed
 Who both write well and write full speed ;
 Who throw their Helicon about
 As freely as a conduit spout !
 Friend Robert thus, like *chien sçavant*,
 Lets fall a poem *en passant*,
 Nor needs his genuine ore refine ;
 'Tis ready polished from the mine."

TO JOSEPH HILL

If I write not to you
 As I gladly would do
 To a Man of your Mettle and Sense,
 'Tis a Fault I must own
 For which I'll atone
 When I take my Departure from hence.

To tell you the Truth
 I'm a queer kind of Youth,
 And I care not if all the world knows it ;
 Whether Sloven or Beau,
 In Square, Alley, or Row,
 At Whitehall, in the Court or the Closet.

Having written thus much
 In Honest high Dutch,
 I must now take a nobler stile up :
 Give my Fancy a prick,
 My Invention a Flick,
 And my genius a pretty smart Fillip.

For the Bus'ness in Hand
 You are to understand,
 Is indeed neither trifling nor small :
 But which you may transact
 If your scull is not crackt,
 As well as the best of them all

And so may your *Dear Wife*
 Be the Joy of your Life,
 And of all our brave Troops the Commandress,
 As you shall convey
 What herein I say
 To the very fair Lady, my Laundress.

That to Town I shall Trot
 (No I Lie, I shall not,
 For to Town I shall Jog in the stage)
 On October the Twentieth,
 For my Father consenteth
 To make me the Flower of the Age.

So bid her prepare
 Every Table and Chair,
 And warm well my Bed by the Fire,
 And if this be not done
 I shall break her Back bone
 As sure as I ever come nigh her.

I am Jovial and Merry,
 Have writ till I'm weary,
 Am become, with a great deal of Talking, hoarse ;
 So farewell—sweet Lad !
 Is all I shall add,
 Except
 your obedient *stalking Horse*.

W. COWPER.

G. BERK,
Octb 10th, 1755.

OF HIMSELF

WILLIAM was once a bashful youth ;
His modesty was such,
That one might say (to say the truth)
He rather had too much.

Some said that it was want of sense,
And others want of spirit,
(So blest a thing is impudence,)
While others could not bear it.

But some a different notion had,
And, at each other winking,
Observed that, though he little said,
He paid it off with thinking.

Howe'er, it happened, by degrees,
He mended and grew perter ;
In company was more at ease,
And dressed a little smarter ;

Nay, now and then would look quite gay,
As other people do ;
And sometimes said, or tried to say,
A witty thing or so.

He eyed the women, and made free
To comment on their shapes ;
So that there was, or seemed to be,
No fear of a relapse.

The women said, who thought him rough
But now no longer foolish,
"The creature may do well enough,
But wants a deal of polish."

At length, improved from head to heel,
'Twere scarce too much to say,
No dancing bear was so genteel,
Or half so *dégagé*.

Now that a miracle so strange
May not in vain be shown,
Let the dear maid who wrought the change
E'en claim him for her own.

TO DELIA

AN APOLOGY FOR NOT SHOWING HER WHAT I HAD WROTE

DID not my Muse (what can she less?)
 Perceive her own unworthiness,
 Could she by some well-chosen theme
 But hope to merit your esteem,
 She would not thus conceal her lays,
 Ambitious to deserve your praise.
 But should my Delia take offence,
 And frown on her impertinence,
 In silence, sorrowing and forlorn,
 Would the despairing trifler mourn,
 Curse her ill-tuned, unpleasing lute,
 Then sigh and sit for ever mute.
 In secret therefore let her play,
 Squandering her idle notes away,
 In secret as she chants along,
 Cheerful and careless in her song;
 Nor heeds she whether harsh or clear,
 Free from each terror, every fear,
 From that, of all most dreaded, free,
 The terror of offending *Thee*.

Catfield, July 1752.

At the same place

DELIA, the unkindest girl on earth,
 When I besought the fair,
 That favour of intrinsic worth,
 A ringlet of her hair,

Refused that instant to comply
 With my absurd request,
 For reasons she could specify,
 Some twenty score at least.

Trust me, my dear, however odd
 It may appear to say,
 I sought it merely to defraud
 The spoiler of his prey.

Yet when its sister locks shall fade,
 As quickly fade they must,
 When all their beauties are decayed,
 Their gloss, their colour, lost—

WILLIAM COWPER

Ah then ! if haply to my share
 Some slender pittance fall,
 If I but gain one single hair,
 Nor age usurp them all ;—

When you behold it still as sleek,
 As lovely to the view,
 As when it left thy snowy neck,—
 That Eden where it grew,—

Then shall my Delia's self declare
 That I professed the truth,
 And have preserved my little share
 In everlasting youth.

At Catfield

THIS evening, Delia, you and I
 Have managed most delightfully,
 For with a frown we parted ;
 Having contrived some trifle that
 We both may be much troubled at,
 And sadly disconcerted.

Yet, well as each performed their part,
 We might perceive it was but art ;
 And that we both intended
 To sacrifice a little ease ;
 For all such petty flaws as these
 Are made but to be mended.

You knew, dissembler ! all the while,
 How sweet it was to reconcile
 After this heavy pelt ;
 That we should gain by this allay
 When next we met, and laugh away
 The care we never felt.

Happy ! when we but seek to endure
 A little pain, then find a cure
 By double joy requited ;
 For friendship, like a severed bone,
 Improves and gains a stronger tone
 When aptly reunited.

WRITTEN IN A QUARREL

(THE DELIVERY OF IT PREVENTED BY A RECONCILIATION)

THINK, Delia, with what cruel haste
Our fleeting pleasures move,
Nor heedless thus in sorrow waste
The moments due to love ;

Be wise, my fair, and gently treat
These few that are our friends ;
Think, thus abused, what sad regret
Their speedy flight attends !

Sure in those eyes I loved so well,
And wished so long to see,
Anger I thought could never dwell,
Or anger aimed at me.

No bold offence of mine I knew
Should e'er provoke your hate ;
And, early taught to think you true,
Still hoped a gentler fate.

With kindness bless the present hour,
Or oh ! we meet in vain !
What can we do in absence more
Than suffer and complain ?

Fated to ills beyond redress,
We must endure our woe ;
The days allowed us to possess,
'Tis madness to forego.

THE SYMPTOMS OF LOVE

WOULD my Delia know if I love, let her take
My last thought at night, and the first when I wake ;
With my prayers and best wishes preferred for her sake.

Let her guess what I muse on, when, rambling alone,
I stride o'er the stubble each day with my gun,
Never ready to shoot till the covey is flown.

Yet not on those I found my bliss,
But in the noble ecstasies
The faithful bosom knows.

And when she prunes her wings for flight,
And flutters nimbly from my sight,
Contented I resign
Whate'er she gave ; thy love alone
I can securely call my own,
Happy while that is mine.

ON HER ENDEAVOURING TO CONCEAL HER GRIEF AT PARTING

AH ! wherefore should my weeping maid suppress
Those gentle signs of undissembled woe ?
When from soft love proceeds the deep distress,
Ah ! why forbid the willing tears to flow ?

Since for my sake each dear translucent drop
Breaks forth, best witness of thy truth sincere,
My lips should drink the precious mixture up,
And, ere it falls, receive the trembling tear.

Trust me, these symptoms of thy faithful heart
In absence shall my dearest hope sustain ;
Delia ! since such thy sorrow that we part,
Such when we meet thy joy shall be again.

Hard is that heart and unsubdued by love
That feels no pain, nor ever heaves a sigh ;
Such hearts the fiercest passions only prove,
Or freeze in cold insensibility.

Oh ! then indulge thy grief, nor fear to tell
The gentle source from whence thy sorrows flow ;
Nor think it weakness when we love to feel,
Nor think it weakness what we feel to show.

THE LOVER'S HEART IN ABSENCE

Bid adieu, my sad heart, bid adieu to thy peace !
Thy pleasure is past, and thy sorrows increase ;
See the shadows of evening how far they extend,
And a long night is coming, that never may end ;
For the sun is now set that enlivened the scene,
And an age must be past ere it rises again.

Already deprived of its splendour and heat,
I feel thee more slowly, more heavily beat;
Perhaps, overstrained with the quick pulse of pleasure,
Thou art glad of this respite to beat at thy leisure;
But the sigh of distress shall now weary thee more
Than the flutter and tumult of passion before.

The heart of a lover is never at rest,
With joy overwhelmed, or with sorrow oppressed:
When Delia is near, all is ecstasy then,
And I even forget I must lose her again:
When absent, as wretched as happy before,
Despairing I cry "I shall see her no more!"

Berkhamstead.

WRITTEN AFTER LEAVING HER AT NEW BURNS

How quick the change from joy to woe!
How chequered is our lot below!
Seldom we view the prospect fair,
Dark clouds of sorrow, pain, and care
(Some pleasing intervals between)
Scowl over more than half the scene.
Last week with Delia, gentle maid,
Far hence in happier fields I strayed,
While on her dear enchanting tongue
Soft sounds of grateful welcome hung,
For absence had withheld it long.
"Welcome, my long-lost love," she said,
"E'er since our adverse fates decreed
That we must part, and I must mourn
Till once more blessed by thy return,
Love, on whose influence I relied
For all the transports I enjoyed,
Has played the cruel tyrant's part
And turned tormentor to my heart.
But let me hold thee to my breast,
Dear partner of my joy and rest,
And not a pain, and not a fear
Or anxious doubt, shall enter there."
Happy, thought I, the favoured youth
Blest with such undissembled truth!
Five suns successive rose and set,
And saw no monarch in his state,
Wrapped in the blaze of majesty,
So free from every care as I.

Next day the scene was overcast ;
 Such day till then I never passed,
 For on that day, relentless fate !—
 Delia and I must separate.
 Yet, ere we looked our last farewell,
 From her dear lips this comfort fell :
 “ Fear not that time, where'er we rove,
 Or absence, shall abate my love.”
 And can I doubt, my charming maid,
 As unsincere what you have said ?
 Banished from thee to what I hate,
 ‘Dull neighbours and insipid chat,
 No joy to cheer me, none in view,
 But the dear hope of meeting you ;
 And that, through passion's optic seen,
 With ages interposed between ;
 Blessed with the kind support you give,
 'Tis by your promised truth I live ;
 How deep my woes, how fierce my flame,
 You best may tell who feel the same.

At Berkhamstead.

R. S. S.

ALL-WORSHIPPED Gold ! thou mighty mystery !
 Say by what name shall I address thee rather,
 Our blessing, or our bane ? Without thy aid
 The generous pangs of pity but distress
 The human heart that fain would feel the bliss
 Of blessing others ; and, enslaved by thee,
 Far from relieving woes which others feel,
 Misers oppress themselves. Our blessing then
 With virtue when possessed ; without, our bane.
 If in my bosom unperceived there lurk
 The deep-sown seeds of avarice or ambition,
 Blame me, ye great ones (for I scorn your censure),
 But let the generous and the good commend me
 That to my Delia I direct them all,
 The worthiest object of a virtuous love.
 Oh ! to some distant scene, a willing exile
 From the wild uproar of this busy world,
 Were it my fate with Delia to retire ;
 With her to wander through the sylvan shade,
 Each morn, or o'er the moss-imbrownèd turf,
 Where, blest as the prime parents of mankind
 In their own Eden, we would envy none,

But, greatly pitying whom the world calls happy,
Gently spin out the silken thread of life ;
While from her lips attentive I receive
The tenderest dictates of the purest flame,
And from her eyes (where soft complacence sits
Illumined with the radiant beams of sense)
Tranquillity beyond a monarch's reach.
Forgive me, Heaven, this only avarice
My soul indulges ; I confess the crime
(If to esteem, to covet such perfection
Be criminal). Oh, grant me Delia ! grant me wealth !
Wealth to alleviate, not increase my wants ;
And grant me virtue, without which nor wealth,
Nor Delia, can avail to make me blest.

WRITTEN IN A FIT OF ILLNESS

R. S. S.

IN these sad hours, a prey to ceaseless pain,
While feverish pulses leap in every vein,
When each faint breath the last short effort seems
Of life just parting from my feeble limbs ;
How wild soe'er my wandering thoughts may be,
Still, gentle Delia, still they turn on thee !
At length if, slumbering to a short repose,
A sweet oblivion frees me from my woes,
Thy form appears, thy footsteps I pursue
Through springy vales, and meadows washed in dew .
Thy arm supports me to the fountain's brink,
Where, by some secret power forbid to drink,
Gasping with thirst, I view the tempting flood
That flies my touch, or thickens into mud ;
Till thine own hand immersed the goblet dips,
And bears it streaming to my burning lips.
Then borne aloft on fancy's wing we fly,
Like souls embodied to their native sky ;
Now every rock, each mountain, disappears ;
And the round earth an even surface wears ;
When lo ! the force of some resistless weight
Bears me straight down from that pernicious height ;
Parting, in vain our struggling arms we close ;
Abhorred forms, dire phantoms, interpose ;
With trembling voice on thy loved name I call ;
And gulfs yawn ready to receive my fall.

From these fallacious visions of distress
 I wake ; nor are my real sorrows less.
 Thy absence, Delia, heightens every ill,
 And gives e'en trivial pains the power to kill.
 Oh ! wert thou near me ; yet that wish forbear !
 'Twere vain, my love,—'twere vain to wish thee near ;
 Thy tender heart would heave with anguish too,
 And, by partaking, but increase my woe.
 Alone I'll grieve, till, gloomy sorrow past,
 Health, like the cheerful day-spring, comes at last,—
 Comes fraught with bliss to banish every pain,
 Hope, joy, and peace, and Delia, in her train !

TO DELIA

Hope, like the short-lived ray that gleams awhile
 Through wintry skies upon the frozen waste,
 Cheers e'en the face of misery to a smile ;
 But soon the momentary pleasure's past.

How oft, my Delia, since our last farewell
 (Years that have rolled since that distressful hour),
 Grieved I have said, when most our hopes prevail,
 Our promised happiness is least secure.

Oft I have thought the scene of troubles closed,
 And hoped once more to gaze upon your charms ;
 As oft some dire mischance has interposed,
 And snatched the expected blessing from my arms.

The seaman thus, his shattered vessel lost,
 Still vainly strives to shun the threatening death ;
 And while he thinks to gain the friendly coast,
 And drops his feet, and feels the sands beneath,

Borne by the wave steep-sloping from the shore,
 Back to the inclement deep, again he beats
 The surge aside, and seems to tread secure ;
 And now the reflux wave his baffled toil defeats.

Had you, my love, forbade me to pursue
 My fond attempt ; disdainfully retired,
 And with proud scorn compelled me to subdue
 The ill-fated passion by yourself inspired ;

Then haply to some distant spot removed,
Hopeless to gain, unwilling to molest
With fond entreaties whom I dearly loved,
Despair or absence had redeemed my rest.

But now, sole partner in my Delia's heart,
Yet doomed far off in exile to complain,
Eternal absence cannot ease my smart,
And hope subsists but to prolong my pain.

Oh then, kind Heaven, be this my latest breath !
Here end my life, or make it worth my care ;
Absence from whom we love is worse than death,
And frustrate hope severer than despair.

TO DELIA

1755

Me to whatever state the gods assign,
Believe, my love, whatever state be mine,
Ne'er shall my breast one anxious sorrow know,
Ne'er shall my heart confess a real woe,
If to thy share Heaven's choicest blessings fall,
As thou hast virtue to deserve them all.
Yet vain, alas ! that idle hope would be
That builds on happiness remote from thee.
Oh ! may thy charms, whate'er our fate decrees,
Please, as they must, but let them only please—
Not like the sun with equal influence shine,
Nor warm with transport any heart but mine.
Ye who from wealth the ill-grounded title boast
To claim whatever beauty charms you most ;
Ye sons of fortune, who consult alone
Her parents' will, regardless of her own,
Know that a love like ours, a generous flame,
No wealth can purchase, and no power reclaim.
The soul's affection can be only given
Free, unextorted, as the grace of Heaven.

Is there whose faithful bosom can endure
Pangs fierce as mine nor ever hope a cure ?
Who sighs in absence of the dear-loved maid,
Nor summons once indifference to his aid ?
Who can, like me, the nice resentment prove,
The thousand soft disquietudes of love ;
The trivial strifes that cause a real pain ;
The real bliss when reconciled again ?

Let him alone dispute the real prize,
 And read his sentence in my Delia's eyes.
 There shall he read all gentleness and truth,
 But not himself the dear distinguished youth ;
 Pity for him perhaps they may express,
 Pity that will but heighten his distress.
 But, wretched rival ! he must sigh to see
 The sprightlier rays of love directed all to me.

And thou, dear antidote of every pain
 Which fortune can inflict, or love ordain,
 Since early love has taught thee to despise
 What the world's worthless votaries only prize,
 Believe, my love ! no less the generous god
 Rules in my breast, his ever blest abode ;
 There has he driven each gross desire away,
 Directing every wish and every thought to thee !
 Then can I ever leave my Delia's arms,
 A slave, devoted to inferior charms ?
 Can e'er my soul her reason so disgrace ?
 For what blest minister of heavenly race
 Would quit that heaven to find a happier place ?

ABSENCE AND BEREAVEMENT

DOOMED, as I am, in solitude to waste
 The present moments, and regret the past ;
 Deprived of every joy I valued most,
 My friend torn from me, and my mistress lost,
 Call not this gloom I wear, this anxious mien,
 The dull effect of humour, or of spleen !
 Still, still I mourn, with each returning day,
 Him snatched by fate in early youth away,
 And her, through tedious years of doubt and pain,
 Fixed in her choice, and faithful, but in vain !
 O prone to pity, generous, and sincere,
 Whose eye ne'er yet refused the wretch a tear ;
 Whose heart the real claim of friendship knows,
 Nor thinks a lover's are but fancied woes ;
 See me, ere yet my destined course half done,
 Cast forth a wanderer on a world unknown !
 See me neglected on the world's rude coast,
 Each dear companion of my voyage lost,
 Nor ask why clouds of sorrow shade my brow,
 And ready tears wait only leave to flow,
 Why all that soothes a heart from anguish free,
 All that delights the happy, palls with me !

ON READING THE "PRAYER FOR INDIFFERENCE."

And dwells there in a female heart,
By bounteous heaven designed
The choicest raptures to impart,
To feel the most refined ;

Dwells there a wish in such a breast
Its nature to forego,
To smother in ignoble rest
At once both bliss and woe ?

Far be the thought, and far the strain
Which breathes the low desire,
How sweet soe'er the verse complain,
Though Phœbus string the lyre.

Come then, fair maid (in nature wise),
Who, knowing them, can tell
From generous sympathy what joys
The glowing bosom swell ;

In justice to the various powers
Of pleasing, which you share,
Join me, amid your silent hours,
To form the better prayer.

With lenient balm may Oberon hence
To fairy-land be driven,
With every herb that blunts the sense
Mankind received from heaven.

Oh ! if my Sovereign Author please,
Far be it from my fate
To live unblest in torpid ease,
And slumber on in state ;

Each tender tie of life defied,
Whence social pleasures spring ;
Unmoved with all the world beside,
A solitary thing.

Some Alpine mountain wrapt in snow
Thus braves the whirling blast,
Eternal winter doomed to know,
No genial spring to taste ;

In vain warm suns their influence shed,
 The zephyrs sport in vain,
 He rears unchanged his barren head,
 Whilst beauty decks the plain.

What though, in scaly armour dressed,
Indifference may repel
 The shafts of woe, in such a breast
 No joy can ever dwell.

'Tis woven in the world's great plan,
 And fixed by Heaven's decree,
 That all the true delights of man
 Should spring from *Sympathy*.

'Tis nature bids, and, whilst the laws
 Of nature we retain,
 Our self-approving bosom draws
 A pleasure from its pain.

Thus grief itself has comforts dear
 The sordid never know ;
 And ecstasy attends the tear,
 When virtue bids it flow.

For when it streams from that pure source,
 No bribes the heart can win
 To check, or alter from its course,
 The luxury within.

Peace to the phlegm of sullen elves,
 Who, if from labour eased,
 Extend no care beyond themselves,
 Unpleasing and unpleased.

Let no low thought suggest the prayer !
 Oh ! grant, kind Heaven, to me,
 Long as I draw ethereal air,
 Sweet Sensibility !

Where'er the heavenly nymph is seen,
 With lustre-beaming eye,
 A train, attendant on their queen,
 (Her rosy chorus) fly.

The jocund Loves in Hymen's band,
 With torches ever bright,
 And generous Friendship hand in hand
 With Pity's watery sight.

The gentler Virtues too are joined,
In youth immortal warm,
The soft relations which, combined,
Give life her every charm.

The Arts come smiling in the close,
And lend celestial fire ;
The marble breathes, the canvas glows,
The Muses sweep the lyre.

Still may my melting bosom cleave
To sufferings not my own ;
And still the sigh responsive heave,
Where'er is heard a groan.

So Pity shall take Virtue's part,
Her natural ally,
And fashioning my softened heart,
Prepare it for the sky.

This artless vow may Heaven receive,
And you, fond maid, approve ;
So may your guiding angel give
Whate'er you wish or love.

So may the rosy-fingered hours
Lead on the various year,
And every joy which now is yours
Extend a larger sphere.

And suns to come, as round they wheel,
Your golden moments bless,
With all a tender heart can feel,
Or lively fancy guess.

THE CERTAINTY OF DEATH

MORTALS ! around your destined heads
Thick fly the shafts of Death,
And lo ! the savage spoiler spreads
A thousand toils beneath.

In vain we trifle with our fate ;
Try every art in vain ;
At best we but prolong the date
And lengthen out our pain.

WILLIAM COWPER

Fondly we think all danger fled,
 For Death is ever nigh ;
 Outstrips our unavailing speed,
 Or meets us as we fly.

Thus the wrecked mariner may strive
 Some desert shore to gain,
 Secure of life, if he survive
 The fury of the main.

But there, to famine doomed a prey,
 Finds, the mistaken wretch !
 He but escaped the troubled sea
 To perish on the beach.

Since then in vain we strive to guard
 Our frailty from the foe,
 Lord, let me live not unprepared
 To meet the fatal blow !

TRANSLATION OF PSALM CXXXVII

To Babylon's proud waters brought,
 In bondage where we lay,
 With tears on Sion's Hill we thought,
 And sighed our hours away ;
 Neglected on the willows hung
 Our useless harps, while every tongue
 Bewailed the fatal day.

Then did the base insulting foe
 Some joyous notes demand,
 Such as in Sion used to flow
 From Judah's happy band :
 Alas ! what joyous notes have we,
 Our country spoiled, no longer free,
 And in a foreign land ?

O Solyma ! if e'er thy praise
 Be silent in my song,
 Rude and unpleasing be the lays,
 And artless be my tongue !
 Thy name my fancy still employs ;
 To thee, great fountain of my joys,
 My sweetest airs belong.

Remember, Lord ! that hostile sound,
When Edom's children cried,
"Razed be her turrets to the ground,
And humbled be her pride !"
Remember, Lord ! and let the foe
The terror of thy vengeance know,
The vengeance they defied !

Thou too, great Babylon, shalt fall
A victim to our God ;
Thy monstrous crimes already call
For heaven's chastising rod.
Happy who shall thy little ones
Relentless dash against the stones,
And spread their limbs abroad.

LINES WRITTEN UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF DELIRIUM

HATRED and vengeance, my eternal portion,
Scarce can endure delay of execution,
Wait with impatient readiness to seize my
Soul in a moment.

Damned below Judas ; more abhorred than he was,
Who for a few pence sold his holy Master !
Twice-betrayed Jesus me, the last delinquent,
Deems the profanest.

Man disavows, and Deity disowns me,
Hell might afford my miseries a shelter ;
Therefore Hell keeps her ever-hungry mouths all
Bolted against me.

Hard lot ! encompassed with a thousand dangers ;
Weary, faint, trembling with a thousand terrors,
I'm called, if vanquished, to receive a sentence
Worse than Abiram's.

Him the vindictive rod of angry Justice
Sent quick and howling to the centre headlong ;
I, fed with judgment, in a fleshly tomb, am
Buried above ground.

A SONG OF MERCY AND JUDGMENT

LORD, I love the habitation
 Where the Saviour's honour dwells.
 At the sound of Thy salvation
 With delight my bosom swells.
 Grace Divine, how sweet the sound !
 Sweet the grace that I have found.

Me thro' waves of deep affliction
 Dearest Saviour ! Thou has brought,
 Fiery deeps of sharp conviction
 Hard to bear and passing thought.
 Sweet the sound of grace Divine,
 Sweet the grace which makes me Thine.

From the cheerful beams of morning
 Sad I turned mine eyes away :
 And the shades of night returning
 Filled my soul with new dismay.
 Grace Divine, how sweet the sound !
 Sweet the grace that I have found.

Food I loathed, nor ever tasted
 But by violence constrained,
 Strength decayed and body wasted
 Spoke the terrors I sustained.
 Sweet the sound of grace Divine,
 Sweet the grace which makes me Thine.

Bound and watched, lest, life abhorring,
 I should my own death procure,
 For to me the pit of roaring
 Seemed more easy to endure.
 Grace Divine, how sweet the sound !
 Sweet the grace which I have found.

Fear of Thee with gloomy sadness
 Overwhelmed Thy guilty worm,
 Till, reduced to moping madness,
 Reason sank beneath the storm.
 Sweet the sound of grace Divine,
 Sweet the grace which makes me Thine.

Then what soul-distressing noises
Seemed to reach me from below,
Visionary scenes and voices,
Flames of Hell and screams of woe !
Grace Divine, how sweet the sound !
Sweet the grace which I have found.

But at length a word of healing,
Sweeter than an angel's note,
From the Saviour's lips distilling,
Chased despair and changed my lot.
Sweet the sound of grace Divine,
Sweet the grace which makes me Thine.

'Twas a word well-timed and suited
To the need of such an hour,
Sweet to one like me polluted,
Spoke in love and sealed with power.
Grace Divine, how sweet the sound !
Sweet the grace which I have found.

"I," He said, "have seen thee grieving,
Loved thee as I passed thee by,
Be not faithless, but believing,
Look and live and never die.
Sweet the sound of grace Divine,
Sweet the grace which makes me Thine.

"Take the bloody seal I give thee
Deep impressed upon thy soul ;
God, thy God, will now receive thee,
Faith hath saved thee, thou art whole."
Grace Divine, how sweet the sound !
Sweet the grace which I have found.

All at once my chains were broken,
From my feet my fetters fell,
And that word, in pity spoken,
Snatched me from the gates of Hell.
Grace Divine, how sweet the sound !
Sweet the grace which I have found.

Since that hour, in hope of glory,
With Thy followers I am found,
And relate the wondrous story
To Thy listening saints around.
Sweet the sound of grace Divine,
Sweet the grace which makes me Thine.

DIE ULTIMO, 1774

HEU! quam remotus vescor ab omnibus
Quibus fruebar sub lare patrio,
Quam nescius jucunda quondam
Arva, domum, socios reliqui!

Et praeter omnes te mihi flebilem,
Te cariorem luce vel artubus,
Te vinculo nostram jugali,
Deserui tremulam sub ense.

Sed nec ferocem me genuit pater,
Nec vagientem nutriit ubere
Leæna dumoso sub antro,
Fata sed hoc voluere nostra.

Et, fluctuosum ceu mare volvitur,
Dum commovebar mille timoribus,
Coactus in fauces Averni,
Totus atro perii sub amne.



OLNEY

FROM AN ENGRAVING BY FINDEN AFTER A DRAWING BY J. D. HARDING

OLNEY HYMNS

I. WALKING WITH GOD

Gen. v. 24

Oh for a closer walk with God !
A calm and heavenly frame ;
A light to shine upon the road
That leads me to the Lamb !

Where is the blessedness I knew
When first I saw the Lord ?
Where is the soul-refreshing view
Of Jesus and his word ?

What peaceful hours I once enjoyed !
How sweet their memory still !
But they have left an aching void
The world can never fill.

Return, O holy Dove, return,
Sweet messenger of rest !
I hate the sins that made thee mourn,
And drove thee from my breast.

The dearest idol I have known,
Whate'er that idol be,
Help me to tear it from thy throne
And worship only thee.

So shall my walk be close with God,
Calm and serene my frame ;
So purer light shall mark the road
That leads me to the Lamb.

II. JEHOVAH-JIREH

THE LORD WILL PROVIDE

Gen. xxii. 14

THE saints should never be dismayed,
Nor sink in hopeless fear ;
For when they least expect his aid
The Saviour will appear.

This Abraham found : he raised the knife ;
 God saw, and said, " Forbear !
 Yon ram shall yield his meaner life ;
 Behold the victim there."

Once David seemed Saul's certain prey ;
 But hark ! the foe's at hand ;
 Saul turns his arms another way,
 To save the invaded land.

When Jonah sunk beneath the wave,
 He thought to rise no more ;
 But God prepared a fish to save,
 And bear him to the shore.

Blest proofs of power and grace divine,
 That meet us in his word !
 May every deep-felt care of mine
 Be trusted with the Lord.

Wait for his seasonable aid,
 And though it tarry, wait :
 The promise may be long delayed,
 But cannot come too late.

III. JEHOVAH-ROPHI

I AM THE LORD THAT HEALETH THEE

Exod. xv. 26

HEAL us, Emmanuel ! here we are,
 Waiting to feel thy touch :
 Deep-wounded souls to thee repair,
 And, Saviour, we are such.

Our faith is feeble, we confess,
 We faintly trust thy word ;
 But wilt thou pity us the less ?
 Be that far from thee, Lord !

Remember him who once applied,
 With trembling, for relief ;
 " Lord, I believe," with tears he cried,
 " Oh, help my unbelief !"

She too, who touched thee in the press
 And healing virtue stole,
 Was answered, " Daughter, go in peace,
 Thy faith hath made thee whole."

Concealed amid the gathering throng,
 She would have shunned thy view ;
 And if her faith was firm and strong,
 Had strong misgivings too.

Like her, with hopes and fears we come,
 To touch thee, if we may ;
 Oh ! send us not despairing home !
 Send none unhealed away !

IV. JEHOVAH-NISSI

THE LORD MY BANNER

Exod. xvii. 15

By whom was David taught
 To aim the deadly blow,
 When he Goliath fought,
 And laid the Gittite low ?
 Nor sword nor spear the stripling took,
 But chose a pebble from the brook.

'Twas Israel's God and King
 Who sent him to the fight ;
 Who gave him strength to sling,
 And skill to aim aright.
 Ye feeble saints, your strength endures
 Because young David's God is yours.

Who ordered Gideon forth
 To storm the invaders' camp,
 With arms of little worth,
 A pitcher and a lamp ?
 The trumpets made his coming known,
 And all the host was overthrown.

Oh ! I have seen the day,
 When with a single word,
 God helping me to say
 " My trust is in the Lord,"
 My soul has quelled a thousand foes,
 Fearless of all that could oppose.

But unbelief, self-will,
 Self-righteousness, and pride,
 How often do they steal
 My weapon from my side !
 Yet David's Lord, and Gideon's friend,
 Will help his servant to the end

V. JEHOVAH-SHALOM

THE LORD SEND PEACE

Judges vi. 24

JESUS! whose blood so freely streamed
 To satisfy the law's demand,
 By thee from guilt and wrath redeemed,
 Before the Father's face I stand.

To reconcile offending man,
 Make Justice drop her angry rod;
 What creature could have formed the plan,
 Or who fulfil it but a God?

No drop remains of all the curse,
 For wretches who deserved the whole;
 No arrows dipt in wrath to pierce
 The guilty, but returning soul.

Peace by such means so dearly bought
 What rebel could have hoped to see?
 Peace, by his injured Sovereign wrought,
 His Sovereign fastened to a tree.

Now, Lord, thy feeble worm prepare!
 For strife with earth and hell begins;
 Confirm and gird me for the war;
 They hate the soul that hates his sins.

Let them in horrid league agree!
 They may assault, they may distress;
 But cannot quench thy love to me,
 Nor rob me of the Lord my peace.

VI. WISDOM

Prov. viii. 22-31

"ERE God had built the mountains,
 Or raised the fruitful hills;
 Before he filled the fountains
 That feed the running rills;
 In me, from everlasting,
 The wonderful I AM
 Found pleasures never wasting,
 And WISDOM is my name.

"When, like a tent to dwell in,
He spread the skies abroad,
And swathed about the swelling
Of Ocean's mighty flood ;
He wrought by weight and measure,
And I was with him then ;
Myself the Father's pleasure,
And mine the sons of men."

Thus Wisdom's words discover
Thy glory and thy grace,
Thou everlasting Lover
Of our unworthy race !
Thy gracious eye surveyed us
Ere stars were seen above ;
In wisdom thou hast made us,
And died for us in love.

And couldst thou be delighted
With creatures such as we,
Who, when we saw thee, slighted,
And nailed thee to a tree ?
Unfathomable wonder,
And mystery divine !
The Voice that speaks in thunder,
Says "Sinner, I am thine !"

VII. VANITY OF THE WORLD

God gives his mercies to be spent ;
Your hoard will do your soul no good ;
Gold is a blessing only lent,
Repaid by giving others food.

The world's esteem is but a bribe,
To buy their peace you sell your own ;
The slave of a vain-glorious tribe,
Who hate you while they make you known.

The joy that vain amusements give,
Oh ! sad conclusion that it brings !
The honey of a crowded hive,
Defended by a thousand stings.

'Tis thus the world rewards the fools
That live upon her treacherous smiles ;
She leads them blindfold by her rules,
And ruins all whom she beguiles.

God knows the thousands who go down
 From pleasure into endless woe,
 And with a long despairing groan
 Blaspheme their Maker as they go.

O fearful thought ! be timely wise ;
 Delight but in a Saviour's charms,
 And God shall take you to the skies,
 Embraced in everlasting arms.

VIII. O LORD, I WILL PRAISE THEE

Isaiah xii. 1

I will praise thee every day
 Now thine anger's turned away ;
 Comfortable thoughts arise
 From the bleeding sacrifice.

Here, in the fair Gospel-field,
 Wells of free salvation yield
 Streams of life, a plenteous store,
 And my soul shall thirst no more.

Jesus is become at length
 My salvation and my strength ;
 And his praises shall prolong,
 While I live, my pleasant song.

Praise ye, then, his glorious name,
 Publish his exalted fame !
 Still his worth your praise exceeds ;
 Excellent are all his deeds.

Raise again the joyful sound,
 Let the nations roll it round !
 Zion, shout ! for this is he ;
 God the Saviour dwells in thee !

IX. THE CONTRITE HEART

Isaiah lvii. 15

THE Lord will happiness divine
 On contrite hearts bestow ;
 Then tell me, gracious God, is mine
 A contrite heart, or no ?

I hear, but seem to hear in vain,
Insensible as steel ;
If aught is felt, 'tis only pain
To find I cannot feel.

I sometimes think myself inclined
To love thee, if I could ;
But often feel another mind
Averse to all that's good.

My best desires are faint and few,
I fain would strive for more ;
But when I cry, " My strength renew "
Seem weaker than before.

Thy saints are comforted, I know,
And love thy house of prayer ;
I therefore go where others go,
But find no comfort there.

Oh make this heart rejoice or ache ;
Decide this doubt for me ;
And, if it be not broken, break,—
And heal it, if it be.

X. THE FUTURE PEACE AND GLORY OF THE CHURCH

Isaiah lx. 15-20

HEAR what God the Lord hath spoken :
" O my people, faint and few,
Comfortless, afflicted, broken,
Fair abodes I build for you.
Thorns of heartfelt tribulation
Shall no more perplex your ways :
You shall name your walls Salvation,
And your gates shall all be Praise.

" There, like streams that feed the garden,
Pleasures without end shall flow ;
For the Lord, your faith rewarding,
All his bounty shall bestow ;
Still in undisturbed possession
Peace and righteousness shall reign ;
Never shall you feel oppression,
Hear the voice of war again.

“ Ye no more your suns descending,
 Waning moons no more shall see ;
 But, your griefs for ever ending,
 Find eternal noon in me :
 God shall rise, and shining o'er ye,
 Change to day the gloom of night ;
 He, the Lord, shall be your glory,
 God your everlasting light.”

XI. JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS

Jer. xxiii. 6

My God, how perfect are thy ways !
 But mine polluted are ;
 Sin twines itself about my praise,
 And slides into my prayer.

When I would speak what thou hast done
 To save me from my sin,
 I cannot make thy mercies known,
 But self-applause creeps in.

Divine desire, that holy flame
 Thy grace creates in me ;
 Alas ! impatience is its name,
 When it returns to thee.

This heart, a fountain of vile thoughts,
 How does it overflow,
 While self upon the surface floats,
 Still bubbling from below !

Let others in the gaudy dress
 Of fancied merit shine ;
 The Lord shall be my righteousness,
 The Lord for ever mine.

XII. EPHRAIM REPENTING

Jer. xxxi. 18-20

My God, till I received thy stroke,
 How like a beast was I !
 So unaccustomed to the yoke,
 So backward to comply.

With grief my just reproach I bear ;
 Shame fills me at the thought,
 How frequent my rebellions were,
 What wickedness I wrought.

Thy merciful restraint I scorned,
 And left the pleasant road ;
 Yet turn me, and I shall be turned !
 Thou art the Lord my God.

“ Is Ephraim banished from my thoughts,
 Or vile in my esteem ?
 No,” saith the Lord, “ with all his faults,
 I still remember him.”

“ Is he a dear and pleasant child ?
 Yes, dear and pleasant still ;
 Though sin his foolish heart beguiled,
 And he withstood my will.

“ My sharp rebuke has laid him low,
 He seeks my face again ;
 My pity kindles at his woe,
 He shall not seek in vain.”

XIII. THE COVENANT

Ezek. xxxvi. 25-28

THE Lord proclaims his grace abroad !
 “ Behold, I change your hearts of stone ;
 Each shall renounce his idol-god,
 And serve, henceforth, the Lord alone.

“ My grace, a flowing stream, proceeds
 To wash your filthiness away ;
 Ye shall abhor your former deeds
 And learn my statutes to obey.

“ My truth the great design ensures,
 I give myself away to you ;
 You shall be mine, I will be yours,
 Your God unalterably true.

“ Yet not unsought, or unimplored,
 The plenteous grace shall I confer ;
 No—your whole hearts shall seek the Lord,
 I'll put a praying spirit there.

WILLIAM COWPER

"From the first breath of life divine
Down to the last expiring hour,
The gracious work shall all be mine,
Begun and ended in my power."

XIV. JEHOVAH-SHAMMAH

Ezek. xlviii. 35

"As birds their infant brood protect,
And spread their wings to shelter them,
(Thus saith the Lord to his elect,)
So will I guard Jerusalem."

And what then is Jerusalem,
This darling object of his care?
Where is its worth in God's esteem?
Who built it? who inhabits there?

Jehovah founded it in blood,
The blood of his incarnate Son;
There dwell the saints, once foes to God,
The sinners whom he calls his own.

There, though besieged on every side,
Yet much beloved, and guarded well,
From age to age they have defied
The utmost force of earth and hell.

Let earth repent, and hell despair,
This city has a sure defence;
Her name is called "The Lord is there,"
And who has power to drive him thence?

XV. PRAISE FOR THE FOUNTAIN OPENED

Zech. xiii. 1

THERE is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Emmanuel's veins;
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains.

The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in his day;
And there have I, as vile as he,
Washed all my sins away.

Dear dying Lamb, thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power,
Till all the ransomed church of God
Be saved, to sin no more.

E'er since, by faith, I saw the stream
Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be till I die.

Then in a nobler, sweeter song
I'll sing thy power to save ;
When this poor lisping, stammering tongue
Lies silent in the grave.

Lord, I believe thou hast prepared
(Unworthy though I be)
For me a blood-bought free reward,
A golden harp for me !

'Tis strung and tuned for endless years,
And formed by power divine,
To sound in God the Father's ears
No other name but thine.

XVI. THE SOWER

Matt. xiii. 3

Ye sons of earth, prepare the plough,
Break up your fallow-ground ;
The sower is gone forth to sow
And scatter blessing round.

The seed that finds a stony soil
Shoots forth a hasty blade ;
But ill repays the sower's toil,
Soon withered, scorched, and dead.

The thorny ground is sure to balk
All hopes of harvest there ;
We find a tall and sickly stalk,
But not the fruitful ear.

The beaten path and highway side
Receive the trust in vain ;
The watchful birds the spoil divide,
And pick up all the grain.

WILLIAM COWPER

But where the Lord of grace and power
Has blessed the happy field,
How plenteous is the golden store
The deep-wrought furrows yield !

Father of mercies, we have need
Of thy preparing grace ;
Let the same hand that gives the seed
Provide a fruitful place.

XVII. THE HOUSE OF PRAYER

Mark xi. 17

Thy mansion is the Christian's heart,
O Lord, thy dwelling-place secure !
Bid the unruly throng depart,
And leave the consecrated door.

Devoted as it is to thee,
A thievish swarm frequents the place ;
They steal away my joys from me,
And rob my Saviour of his praise.

There, too, a sharp designing trade
Sin, Satan, and the World maintain ;
Nor cease to press me, and persuade
To part with ease, and purchase pain.

I know them, and I hate their din ;
Am weary of the bustling crowd ;
But while their voice is heard within,
I cannot serve thee as I would.

Oh for the joy thy presence gives,
What peace shall reign when thou art here !
Thy presence makes this den of thieves
A calm delightful house of prayer.

And if thou make thy temple shine,
Yet self-abased will I adore ;
The gold and silver are not mine ;
I give thee what was thine before.

XVIII. LOVEST THOU ME ?

John xxi. 16

HARK, my soul ! it is the Lord ;
'Tis thy Saviour, hear his word ;
Jesus speaks, and speaks to thee,
" Say, poor sinner, lovest thou me ?

"I delivered thee when bound,
And, when bleeding, healed thy wound,
Sought thee wandering, set thee right,
Turned thy darkness into light.

"Can a woman's tender care
Cease towards the child she bare?
Yes, she may forgetful be,
Yet will I remember thee.

"Mine is an unchanging love,
Higher than the heights above,
Deeper than the depths beneath,
Free and faithful, strong as death.

"Thou shalt see my glory soon,
When the work of grace is done;
Partner of my throne shalt be:—
Say, poor sinner, lovest thou me?"

Lord, it is my chief complaint
That my love is weak and faint;
Yet I love thee and adore,—
Oh! for grace to love thee more!

XIX. CONTENTMENT

Phil. iv. 11

FIERCE passions discompose the mind,
As tempests vex the sea;
But calm content and peace we find
When, Lord, we turn to thee.

In vain by reason and by rule
We try to bend the will;
For none but in the Saviour's school
Can learn the heavenly skill.

Since at his feet my soul has sate,
His gracious words to hear,
Contented with my present state,
I cast on him my care.

"Art thou a sinner, soul?" he said,
"Then how canst thou complain?
How light thy troubles here, if weighed
With everlasting pain!"

"If thou of murmuring wouldst be cured,
Compare thy griefs with mine ;
Think what my love for thee endured,
And thou wilt not repine.

"'Tis I appoint thy daily lot,
And I do all things well ;
Thou soon shalt leave this wretched spot,
And rise with me to dwell.

"In life my grace shall strength supply,
Proportioned to thy day ;
At death thou still shalt find me nigh,
To wipe thy tears away."

Thus I, who once my wretched days
In vain repinings spent,
Taught in my Saviour's school of grace,
Have learned to be content.

XX. OLD TESTAMENT GOSPEL

Heb. iv. 2

ISRAEL in ancient days
Not only had a view
Of Sinai in a blaze,
But learned the Gospel too ;
The types and figures were a glass,
In which they saw a Saviour's face.

The paschal sacrifice
And blood-besprinkled door,
Seen with enlightened eyes,
And once applied with power,
Would teach the need of other blood
To reconcile an angry God.

The Lamb, the Dove, set forth
His perfect innocence,
Whose blood of matchless worth
Should be the soul's defence ;
For he who can for sin atone
Must have no failings of his own.

The scape-goat on his head
 The people's trespass bore,
 And, to the desert led,
 Was to be seen no more :
 In him our Surety seemed to say,
 "Behold, I bear your sins away."

Dipped in his fellow's blood,
 The living bird went free ;
 The type, well understood,
 Expressed the sinner's plea ;
 Described a guilty soul enlarged,
 And by a Saviour's death discharged.

Jesus, I love to trace,
 Throughout the sacred page,
 The footsteps of thy grace,
 The same in every age !
 Oh grant that I may faithful be
 To clearer light vouchsafed to me !

XXI. SARDIS

Rev. iii. 1-6

"WRITE to Sardis," saith the Lord,
 "And write what he declares,
 He whose Spirit, and whose word,
 Upholds the seven stars :—
 All thy works and ways I search,
 Find thy zeal and love decayed ;
 Thou art called a living church,
 But thou art cold and dead.

"Watch, remember, seek, and strive,
 Exert thy former pains ;
 Let thy timely care revive,
 And strengthen what remains ;
 Cleanse thine heart, thy works amend,
 Former times to mind recall,
 Lest my sudden stroke descend
 And smite thee once for all.

"Yet I number now in thee
 A few that are upright ;
 These my Father's face shall see,
 And walk with me in white.

When in judgment I appear,
 They for mine shall be confessed ;
 Let my faithful servants hear,—
 And woe be to the rest !”

XXII. PRAYER FOR A BLESSING ON THE YOUNG

BESTOW, dear Lord, upon our youth
 The gift of saving grace ;
 And let the seed of sacred truth
 Fall in a fruitful place.

Grace is a plant, where'er it grows,
 Of pure and heavenly root ;
 But fairest in the youngest shows,
 And yields the sweetest fruit.

Ye careless ones, oh hear betimes
 The voice of sovereign love !
 Your youth is stained with many crimes,
 But mercy reigns above.

True, you are young, but there's a stone
 Within the youngest breast ;
 Or half the crimes which you have done
 Would rob you of your rest.

For you the public prayer is made ;
 Oh join the public prayer !
 For you the secret tear is shed ;
 Oh shed yourselves a tear !

We pray that you may early prove
 The Spirit's power to teach ;
 You cannot be too young to love
 That Jesus whom we preach.

XXIII. PLEADING FOR AND WITH YOUTH

SIN has undone our wretched race ;
 But Jesus has restored,
 And brought the sinner face to face
 With his forgiving Lord.

This we repeat from year to year,
And press upon our youth ;
Lord, give them an attentive ear,
Lord, save them by thy truth !

Blessings upon the rising race !
Make this a happy hour,
According to thy richest grace
And thine Almighty power.

We feel for your unhappy state,
(May you regard it too,)
And would awhile ourselves forget
To pour out prayer for you.

We see, though you perceive it not,
The approaching awful doom ;
Oh tremble at the solemn thought,
And flee the wrath to come !

Dear Saviour, let this new-born year
Spread an alarm abroad ;
And cry in every careless ear,
" Prepare to meet thy God ! "

XXIV. PRAYER FOR CHILDREN

GRACIOUS Lord, our children see !
By thy mercy we are free ;
But shall these, alas ! remain
Subjects still of Satan's reign ?
Israel's young ones when of old
Pharaoh threatened to withhold,
Then thy messenger said, " No ;
Let the children also go ! "

When the angel of the Lord,
Drawing forth his dreadful sword,
Slew with an avenging hand
All the first-born of the land ;
Then thy people's doors he passed,
Where the bloody sign was placed ;
Hear us, now, upon our knees
Plead the blood of Christ for these !

Lord, we tremble, for we know
 How the fierce malicious foe,
 Wheeling round his watchful flight,
 Keeps them ever in his sight :
 Spread thy pinions, King of kings !
 Hide them safe beneath thy wings ;
 Lest the ravenous bird of prey
 Stoop, and bear the brood away.

XXV. JEHOVAH JESUS

My song shall bless the Lord of all,
 My praise shall climb to his abode ;
 Thee, Saviour, by that name I call,
 The Great Supreme, the Mighty God.

Without beginning or decline,
 Object of faith and not of sense ;
 Eternal ages saw him shine,
 He shines eternal ages hence.

As much, when in the manger laid,
 Almighty ruler of the sky,
 As when the six days' work he made
 Filled all the morning stars with joy.

Of all the crowns Jehovah bears,
 Salvation is his dearest claim ;
 That gracious sound well pleased he hears,
 And owns Emmanuel for his name.

A cheerful confidence I feel,
 My well-placed hopes with joy I see ;
 My bosom glows with heavenly zeal,
 To worship him who died for me.

As man, he pities my complaint,
 His power and truth are all divine ;
 He will not fail, he cannot faint ;
 Salvation's sure, and must be mine.

XXVI. ON OPENING A PLACE FOR SOCIAL PRAYER

JESUS ! where'er thy people meet,
 There they behold thy mercy-seat ;
 Where'er they seek thee, thou art found,
 And every place is hallowed ground.

For thou, within no walls confined,
Inhabitest the humble mind ;
Such ever bring thee where they come,
And going take thee to their home.

Dear Shepherd of thy chosen few !
Thy former mercies here renew ;
Here to our waiting hearts proclaim
The sweetness of thy saving name.

Here may we prove the power of prayer,
To strengthen faith, and sweeten care ;
To teach our faint desires to rise,
And bring all heaven before our eyes.

Behold, at thy commanding word
We stretch the curtain and the cord ;
Come thou, and fill this wider space,
And bless us with a large increase.

Lord, we are few, but thou art near,
Nor short thine arm, nor deaf thine ear ;
Oh rend the heavens, come quickly down,
And make a thousand hearts thine own.

XXVII. WELCOME TO THE TABLE

THIS is the feast of heavenly wine,
And God invites to sup ;
The juices of the living Vine
Were pressed to fill the cup.

Oh ! bless the Saviour, ye that eat,
With royal dainties fed ;
Not heaven affords a costlier treat,
For Jesus is the bread.

The vile, the lost, he calls to them ;
Ye trembling souls, appear !
The righteous in their own esteem
Have no acceptance here.

Approach, ye poor, nor dare refuse
The banquet spread for you ;
Dear Saviour, this is welcome news,
Then I may venture too.

If guilt and sin afford a plea,
 And may obtain a place,
 Surely the Lord will welcome me,
 And I shall see his face !

XXVIII. JESUS HASTING TO SUFFER

THE Saviour, what a noble flame
 Was kindled in his breast,
 When, hasting to Jerusalem,
 He marched before the rest !

Good will to men, and zeal for God,
 His every thought engross ;
 He longs to be baptized with blood,
 He pants to reach the cross !

With all his sufferings full in view,
 And woes to us unknown,
 Forth to the task his spirit flew ;
 'Twas love that urged him on.

Lord, we return thee what we can :
 Our hearts shall sound abroad
 Salvation to the dying Man,
 And to the rising God !

And while thy bleeding glories here
 Engage our wondering eyes,
 We learn our lighter cross to bear,
 And hasten to the skies.

XXIX. EXHORTATION TO PRAYER

WHAT various hindrances we meet
 In coming to a mercy-seat !
 Yet who that knows the worth of prayer
 But wishes to be often there ?

Prayer makes the darkened cloud withdraw,
 Prayer climbs the ladder Jacob saw,
 Gives exercise to faith and love,
 Brings every blessing from above.

Restraining prayer, we cease to fight ;
Prayer makes the Christian's armour bright ;
And Satan trembles when he sees
The weakest saint upon his knees.

While Moses stood with arms spread wide,
Success was found on Israel's side ;
But when through weariness they failed,
That moment Amalek prevailed.

Have you no words ? Ah ! think again,
Words flow apace when you complain,
And fill your fellow-creature's ear
With the sad tale of all your care.

Were half the breath thus vainly spent
To Heaven in supplication sent,
Your cheerful song would oftener be,
"Hear what the Lord has done for me."

XXX. THE LIGHT AND GLORY OF THE WORD

THE Spirit breathes upon the Word,
And brings the truth to sight ;
Precepts and promises afford
A sanctifying light.

A glory gilds the sacred page,
Majestic like the sun ;
It gives a light to every age,
It gives, but borrows none.

The hand that gave it still supplies
The gracious light and heat ;
His truths upon the nations rise,
They rise, but never set.

Let everlasting thanks be thine
For such a bright display
As makes a world of darkness shine
With beams of heavenly day.

My soul rejoices to pursue
The steps of him I love,
Till glory break upon my view
In brighter worlds above.

XXXI. ON THE DEATH OF A MINISTER

His master taken from his head,
Elisha saw him go ;
And in desponding accents said,
“ Ah, what must Israel do ? ”

But he forgot the Lord who lifts
The beggar to the throne ;
Nor knew that all Elijah's gifts
Would soon be made his own.

What ! when a Paul has run his course,
Or when Apollos dies,
Is Israel left without resource ?
And have we no supplies ?

Yes, while the dear Redeemer lives,
We have a boundless store,
And shall be fed with what he gives
Who lives for evermore.

XXXII. THE SHINING LIGHT

My former hopes are fled,
My terror now begins ;
I feel, alas ! that I am dead
In trespasses and sins.

Ah, whither shall I fly ?
I hear the thunder roar ;
The law proclaims destruction nigh,
And vengeance at the door.

When I review my ways,
I dread impending doom :
But sure a friendly whisper says,
“ Flee from the wrath to come.”

I see, or think I see,
A glimmering from afar ;
A beam of day, that shines for me,
To save me from despair.

Forerunner of the sun,
It marks the pilgrim's way ;
I'll gaze upon it while I run,
And watch the rising day.

XXXIII. THE WAITING SOUL

BREATHE from the gentle south, O Lord,
And cheer me from the north ;
Blow on the treasures of thy word,
And call the spices forth !

I wish, thou know'st, to be resigned,
And wait with patient hope ;
But hope delayed fatigues the mind,
And drinks the spirit up.

Help me to reach the distant goal ;
Confirm my feeble knee ;
Pity the sickness of a soul
That faints for love of thee !

Cold as I feel this heart of mine,
Yet, since I feel it so,
It yields some hope of life divine
Within, however low :

I seem forsaken and alone,
I hear the lion roar ;
And every door is shut but one,
And that is Mercy's door.

There, till the dear Deliverer come,
I'll wait with humble prayer ;
And when he calls his exile home,
The Lord shall find him there.

✓ XXXIV. SEEKING THE BELOVED

To those who know the Lord I speak ;
Is my Beloved near ?
The Bridegroom of my soul I seek,
Oh ! when will he appear ?

Though once a man of grief and shame,
 Yet now he fills a throne,
 And bears the greatest, sweetest name
 That earth or heaven has known.

Grace flies before, and love attends
 His steps where'er he goes;
 Though none can see him but his friends,
 And they were once his foes.

He speaks; obedient to his call
 Our warm affections move:
 Did he but shine alike on all,
 Then all alike would love.

Then love in every heart would reign,
 And war would cease to roar;
 And cruel and bloodthirsty men
 Would thirst for blood no more.

Such Jesus is, and such his grace;
 Oh, may he shine on you!
 And tell him, when you see his face,
 I long to see him too.

XXXV. LIGHT SHINING OUT OF DARKNESS

God moves in a mysterious way
 His wonders to perform;
 He plants his footsteps in the sea,
 And rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines
 Of never-failing skill
 He treasures up his bright designs,
 And works his sovereign will.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,
 The clouds ye so much dread
 Are big with mercy, and shall break
 In blessings on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
 But trust him for his grace;
 Behind a frowning providence
 He hides a smiling face.

His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower.

Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan his work in vain :
God is his own interpreter,
And he will make it plain.

XXXVI. WELCOME CROSS

'Tis my happiness below
Not to live without the cross,
But the Saviour's power to know,
Sanctifying every loss :
Trials must and will befall ;
But with humble faith to see
Love inscribed upon them all,
This is happiness to me.

God in Israel sows the seeds
Of affliction, pain, and toil ;
These spring up and choke the weeds
Which would else o'erspread the soil :
Trials make the promise sweet,
Trials give new life to prayer ;
Trials bring me to his feet,
Lay me low, and keep me there.

Did I meet no trials here,
No chastisement by the way,
Might I not with reason fear
I should prove a castaway ?
Bastards may escape the rod,
Sunk in earthly vain delight :
But the true-born child of God
Must not, would not, if he might.

XXXVII. AFFLICTIONS SANCTIFIED BY THE WORD

Oh, how I love thy holy word,
Thy gracious covenant, O Lord !
It guides me in the peaceful way ;
I think upon it all the day.

What are the mines of shining wealth,
The strength of youth, the bloom of health !
What are all joys compared with those
Thine everlasting word bestows !

Long unafflicted, undismayed,
In pleasure's path secure I strayed ;
Thou madest me feel thy chastening rod,
And straight I turned unto my God.

What though it pierced my fainting heart,
I blessed thine hand that caused the smart ;
It taught my tears awhile to flow,
But saved me from eternal woe.

Oh ! hadst thou left me unchastised,
Thy precepts I had still despised ;
And still the snare in secret laid
Had my unwary feet betrayed.

I love thee, therefore, O my God,
And breathe towards thy dear abode ;
Where, in thy presence fully blest,
Thy chosen saints for ever rest.

XXXVIII. TEMPTATION

THE billows swell, the winds are high,
Clouds overcast my wintry sky ;
Out of the depths to thee I call,—
My fears are great, my strength is small.

O Lord, the pilot's part perform,
And guard and guide me through the storm,
Defend me from each threatening ill,
Control the waves,—say, " Peace ! be still."

Amidst the roaring of the sea
My soul still hangs her hope on thee ;
Thy constant love, thy faithful care,
Is all that saves me from despair.

Dangers of every shape and name
Attend the followers of the Lamb
Who leave the world's deceitful shore,
And leave it to return no more.

Though tempest-tost and half a wreck,
My Saviour through the floods I seek ;
Let neither winds nor stormy main
Force back my shattered bark again.

XXXIX. LOOKING UPWARDS IN A STORM

God of my life, to thee I call,
Afflicted at thy feet I fall ;
When the great water-floods prevail
Leave not my trembling heart to fail !

Friend of the friendless and the faint,
Where should I lodge my deep complaint ?
Where but with thee whose open door
Invites the helpless and the poor !

Did ever mourner plead with thee,
And thou refuse that mourner's plea ?
Does not the word still fixed remain,
That none shall seek thy face in vain ?

That were a grief I could not bear,
Didst thou not hear and answer prayer ;
But a prayer-hearing, answering God
Supports me under every load.

Fair is the lot that's cast for me ;
I have an Advocate with thee ;
They whom the world caresses most
Have no such privilege to boast.

Poor though I am, despised, forgot,
Yet God, my God, forgets me not :
And he is safe, and must succeed,
For whom the Lord vouchsafes to plead.

XL. THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH

My soul is sad, and much dismayed ;
See, Lord, what legions of my foes,
With fierce Apollyon at their head,
My heavenly pilgrimage oppose !

See, from the ever-burning lake,
 How like a smoky cloud they rise !
 With horrid blasts my soul they shake,
 With storms of blasphemies and lies.

Their fiery arrows reach the mark,
 My throbbing heart with anguish tear ;
 Each lights upon a kindred spark,
 And finds abundant fuel there.

I hate the thought that wrongs the Lord ;
 Oh ! I would drive it from my breast,
 With thy own sharp two-edged sword,
 Far as the east is from the west.

Come, then, and chase the cruel host,
 Heal the deep wounds I have received !
 Nor let the powers of darkness boast
 That I am foiled, and thou art grieved !

XLI. PEACE AFTER A STORM

WHEN darkness long has veiled my mind,
 And smiling day once more appears,
 Then, my Redeemer, then I find
 The folly of my doubts and fears.

Straight I upbraid my wandering heart,
 And blush that I should ever be
 Thus prone to act so base a part,
 Or harbour one hard thought of thee.

Oh ! let me then at length be taught
 What I am still so slow to learn ;
 That God is Love, and changes not,
 Nor knows the shadow of a turn.

Sweet truth, and easy to repeat !
 But when my faith is sharply tried,
 I find myself a learner yet,
 Unskilful, weak, and apt to slide.

But, O my Lord, one look from thee
 Subdues the disobedient will,
 Drives doubt and discontent away,
 And thy rebellious worm is still.

Thou art as ready to forgive
 As I am ready to repine ;
 Thou, therefore, all the praise receive ;
 Be shame and self-abhorrence mine.

XLII. MOURNING AND LONGING

THE Saviour hides his face !
 My spirit thirsts to prove
 Renewed supplies of pardoning grace,
 And never-fading love.

The favoured souls who know
 What glories shine in him
 Pant for his presence as the roe
 Pants for the living stream.

What trifles tease me now !
 They swarm like summer flies ;
 They cleave to everything I do,
 And swim before my eyes.

How dull the Sabbath day
 Without the Sabbath's Lord !
 How toilsome then to sing and pray,
 And wait upon the word !

Of all the truths I hear
 How few delight my taste !
 I glean a berry here and there,
 But mourn the vintage past.

Yet let me (as I ought)
 Still hope to be supplied ;
 No pleasure else is worth a thought,
 Nor shall I be denied.

Though I am but a worm,
 Unworthy of his care,
 The Lord will my desire perform,
 And grant me all my prayer.

XLIII. SELF-ACQUAINTANCE

DEAR Lord ! accept a sinful heart
Which of itself complains,
And mourns, with much and frequent smart,
The evil it contains.

There fiery seeds of anger lurk
Which often hurt my frame ;
And wait but for the tempter's work
To fan them to a flame.

Legality holds out a bribe
To purchase life from thee ;
And discontent would fain prescribe
How thou shalt deal with me.

While unbelief withstands thy grace,
And puts the mercy by ;
Presumption, with a brow of brass,
Says, " Give me, or I die ! "

How eager are my thoughts to roam
In quest of what they love !
But ah ! when duty calls them home,
How heavily they move !

Oh, cleanse me in a Saviour's blood,
Transform me by thy power,
And make me thy beloved abode,
And let me roam no more.

XLIV. PRAYER FOR PATIENCE

LORD, who hast suffered all for me,
My peace and pardon to procure,
The lighter cross I bear for thee
Help me with patience to endure.

The storm of loud repining hush ;
I would in humble silence mourn ;
Why should the unburnt, though burning bush,
Be angry as the crackling thorn ?



Man should not faint at thy rebuke,
Like Joshua falling on his face,
When the cursed thing that Achan took
Brought Israel into just disgrace.

Perhaps some golden wedge suppressed,
Some secret sin, offends my God ;
Perhaps that Babylonish vest,
Self-righteousness, provokes the rod.

Ah ! were I buffeted all day,
Mocked, crowned with thorns, and spit upon,
I yet should have no right to say
My great distress is mine alone.

Let me not angrily declare
No pain was ever sharp like mine,
Nor murmur at the cross I bear,
But rather weep, remembering thine.

XLV. SUBMISSION

O LORD, my best desire fulfil,
And help me to resign
Life, health, and comfort to thy will,
And make thy pleasure mine.

Why should I shrink at thy command,
Whose love forbids my fears ?
Or tremble at the gracious hand
That wipes away my tears ?

No, rather let me freely yield
What most I prize to thee ;
Who never hast a good withheld,
Or wilt withhold, from me.

Thy favour, all my journey through,
Thou art engaged to grant ;
What else I want, or think I do,
'Tis better still to want.

Wisdom and mercy guide my way,
Shall I resist them both ?
A poor blind creature of a day,
And crushed before the moth !

But ah ! my inward spirit cries,
 Still bind me to thy sway ;
 Else the next cloud that veils the skies
 Drives all these thoughts away.

XLVI. THE HAPPY CHANGE

How blest thy creature is, O God,
 When, with a single eye,
 He views the lustre of thy word,
 The dayspring from on high !

Through all the storms that veil the skies
 And frown on earthly things,
 The Sun of Righteousness he eyes
 With healing on his wings.

Struck by that light, the human heart,
 A barren soil no more,
 Sends the sweet smell of grace abroad,
 Where serpents lurked before.

The soul, a dreary province once
 Of Satan's dark domain,
 Feels a new empire formed within,
 And owns a heavenly reign.

The glorious orb whose golden beams
 The fruitful year control,
 Since first, obedient to thy word,
 He started from the goal,

Has cheered the nations with the joys
 His orient rays impart ;
 But, Jesus, 'tis thy light alone
 Can shine upon the heart.

XLVII. RETIREMENT

FAR from the world, O Lord, I flee,
 From strife and tumult far ;
 From scenes where Satan wages still
 His most successful war.

The calm retreat, the silent shade,
With prayer and praise agree ;
And seem by thy sweet bounty made
For those who follow thee.

There, if thy Spirit touch the soul,
And grace her mean abode,
Oh ! with what peace, and joy, and love,
She communes with her God !

There like the nightingale she pours
Her solitary lays ;
Nor asks a witness of her song,
Nor thirsts for human praise.

Author and guardian of my life,
Sweet source of light divine,
And—all harmonious names in one—
My Saviour ! thou art mine !

What thanks I owe thee, and what love
—A boundless, endless store—
Shall echo through the realms above,
When time shall be no more.

XLVIII. THE HIDDEN LIFE

To tell the Saviour all my wants,
How pleasing is the task !
Nor less to praise him when he grants
Beyond what I can ask.

My labouring spirit vainly seeks
To tell but half the joy,
With how much tenderness he speaks,
And helps me to reply.

Nor were it wise, nor should I choose,
Such secrets to declare ;
Like precious wines their taste they lose,
Exposed to open air.

But this with boldness I proclaim,
Nor care if thousands hear,
Sweet is the ointment of his name,
Not life is half so dear.

And can you frown, my former friends,
 Who knew what once I was,
 And blame the song that thus commends
 The Man who bore the cross?

Trust me, I draw the likeness true,
 And not as fancy paints;
 Such honour may he give to you,
 For such have all his saints.

XLIX. JOY AND PEACE IN BELIEVING

SOMETIMES a light surprises
 The Christian while he sings;
 It is the Lord who rises
 With healing in his wings:
 When comforts are declining,
 He grants the soul again
 A season of clear shining
 To cheer it after rain.

In holy contemplation
 We sweetly then pursue
 The theme of God's salvation,
 And find it ever new:
 Set free from present sorrow,
 We cheerfully can say,
 E'en let the unknown to-morrow
 Bring with it what it may!

It can bring with it nothing
 But he will bear us through;
 Who gives the lilies clothing
 Will clothe his people too;
 Beneath the spreading heavens
 No creature but is fed;
 And he who feeds the ravens
 Will give his children bread.

Though vine nor fig-tree neither
 Their wonted fruit shall bear,
 Though all the field should wither,
 Nor flocks nor herds be there:
 Yet, God the same abiding,
 His praise shall tune my voice;
 For, while in him confiding,
 I cannot but rejoice.

L. TRUE PLEASURES

LORD, my soul with pleasure springs
When Jesus' name I hear;
And when God the Spirit brings
The word of promise near:
Beauties, too, in holiness
Still delighted I perceive;
Nor have words that can express
The joys thy precepts give.

Clothed in sanctity and grace,
How sweet it is to see
Those who love thee as they pass,
Or when they wait on thee!
Pleasant too to sit and tell
What we owe to love divine;
Till our bosoms grateful swell,
And eyes begin to shine.

Those the comforts I possess,
Which God shall still increase,
All his ways are pleasantness,
And all his paths are peace.
Nothing Jesus did or spoke
Henceforth let me ever slight;
For I love his easy yoke,
And find his burden light.

LI. THE CHRISTIAN

HONOUR and happiness unite
To make the Christian's name a praise;
How fair the scene, how clear the light,
That fills the remnant of his days!

A kingly character he bears,
No change his priestly office knows;
Unfading is the crown he wears,
His joys can never reach a close.

Adorned with glory from on high,
Salvation shines upon his face;
His robe is of the ethereal dye,
His steps are dignity and grace.

Inferior honours he disdains,
 Nor stoops to take applause from earth ;
 The King of kings himself maintains
 The expenses of his heavenly birth.

The noblest creature seen below,
 Ordained to fill a throne above ;
 God gives him all he can bestow,
 His kingdom of eternal love !

My soul is ravished at the thought !
 Methinks from earth I see him rise !
 Angels congratulate his lot,
 And shout him welcome to the skies !

LII. LIVELY HOPE AND GRACIOUS FEAR

I was a grovelling creature once,
 And basely cleaved to earth ;
 I wanted spirit to renounce
 The clod that gave me birth.

But God has breathed upon a worm,
 And sent me from above
 Wings such as clothe an angel's form,
 The wings of joy and love.

With these to Pisgah's top I fly,
 And there delighted stand,
 To view beneath a shining sky
 The spacious promised land.

The Lord of all the vast domain
 Has promised it to me,
 The length and breadth of all the plain
 As far as faith can see.

How glorious is my privilege !
 To thee for help I call ;
 I stand upon a mountain's edge,
 Oh save me, lest I fall !

Though much exalted in the Lord,
 My strength is not my own ;
 Then let me tremble at his word,
 And none shall cast me down.

LIII. FOR THE POOR

WHEN Hagar found the bottle spent,
And wept o'er Ishmael,
A message from the Lord was sent
To guide her to a well.

Should not Elijah's cake and cruse
Convince us at this day,
A gracious God will not refuse
Provisions by the way ?

His saints and servants shall be fed,
The promise is secure ;
" Bread shall be given them," he has said,
" Their water shall be sure."

Repasts far richer they shall prove
Than all earth's dainties are ;
'Tis sweet to taste a Saviour's love
Though in the meanest fare.

To Jesus then your trouble bring,
Nor murmur at your lot ;
While you are poor and He is King,
You shall not be forgot.

LIV. MY SOUL THIRSTETH FOR GOD

I THIRST, but not as once I did
The vain delights of earth to share ;
Thy wounds, Emmanuel, all forbid
That I should seek my pleasures there.

It was the sight of thy dear cross
First weaned my soul from earthly things ;
And taught me to esteem as dross
The mirth of fools and pomp of kings.

I want that grace that springs from thee,
That quickens all things where it flows,
And makes a wretched thorn like me
Bloom as the myrtle, or the rose.

WILLIAM COWPER

Dear fountain of delight unknown,
 No longer sink below the brim ;
 But overflow, and pour me down
 A living and life-giving stream !

For sure, of all the plants that share
 The notice of thy Father's eye,
 None proves less grateful to his care
 Or yields him meaner fruit than I.

LV. LOVE CONSTRAINING TO OBEDIENCE

No strength of nature can suffice
 To serve the Lord aright :
 And what she has she misapplies,
 For want of clearer light.

How long beneath the law I lay
 In bondage and distress ;
 I toiled the precept to obey,
 But toiled without success.

Then to abstain from outward sin
 Was more than I could do ;
 Now, if I feel its power within,
 I feel I hate it too.

Then all my servile works were done
 A righteousness to raise ;
 Now, freely chosen in the Son,
 I freely choose his ways.

"What shall I do," was then the word,
 "That I may worthier grow ?"
 "What shall I render to the Lord ?"
 Is my inquiry now.

To see the law by Christ fulfilled,
 And hear his pardoning voice,
 Changes a slave into a child,
 And duty into choice.

LVI. THE HEART HEALED AND CHANGED BY MERCY

SIN enslaved me many years,
 And led me bound and blind,
 Till at length a thousand fears
 Came swarming o'er my mind.

"Where," said I, in deep distress,
"Will these sinful pleasures end?
How shall I secure my peace,
And make the Lord my friend?"

Friends and ministers said much
The Gospel to enforce;
But my blindness still was such,
I chose a legal course:
Much I fasted, watched, and strove,
Scarce would show my face abroad,
Feared almost to speak or move,
A stranger still to God.

Thus afraid to trust his grace,
Long time did I rebel;
Till, despairing of my case,
Down at his feet I fell:
Then my stubborn heart he broke,
And subdued me to his sway;
By a simple word he spoke,
"Thy sins are done away."

LVII. HATRED OF SIN

HOLY Lord God! I love thy truth,
Nor dare thy least commandment slight;
Yet, pierced by sin, the serpent's tooth,
I mourn the anguish of the bite.

But, though the poison lurks within,
Hope bids me still with patience wait;
Till death shall set me free from sin,
Free from the only thing I hate.

Had I a throne above the rest,
Where angels and archangels dwell,
One sin, unslain, within my breast,
Would make that heaven as dark as hell.

The prisoner sent to breathe fresh air,
And blessed with liberty again,
Would mourn were he condemned to wear
One link of all his former chain.

But, oh ! no foe invades the bliss,
 When glory crowns the Christian's head ;
 One view of Jesus as he is
 Will strike all sin for ever dead.

LVIII. THE NEW CONVERT

THE new-born child of Gospel grace,
 Like some fair tree when summer's nigh,
 Beneath Emmanuel's shining face
 Lifts up his blooming branch on high.

No fears he feels, he sees no foes,
 No conflict yet his faith employs,
 Nor has he learnt to whom he owes
 The strength and peace his soul enjoys.

But sin soon darts its cruel sting,
 And, comforts sinking day by day,
 What seemed his own, a self-fed spring,
 Proves but a brook that glides away.

When Gideon armed his numerous host,
 The Lord soon made his numbers less ;
 And said, " Lest Israel vainly boast,
 ' My arm procured me this success.' "

Thus will he bring our spirits down,
 And draw our ebbing comforts low,
 That, saved by grace, but not our own,
 We may not claim the praise we owe.

LIX. TRUE AND FALSE COMFORTS

O God, whose favourable eye
 The sin-sick soul revives,
 Holy and heavenly is the joy
 Thy shining presence gives.

Not such as hypocrites suppose,
 Who with a graceless heart
 Taste not of thee, but drink a dose
 Prepared by Satan's art.

Intoxicating joys are theirs,
Who, while they boast their light
And seem to soar above the stars,
Are plunging into night.

Lulled in a soft and fatal sleep,
They sin and yet rejoice ;
Were they indeed the Saviour's sheep,
Would they not hear his voice ?

Be mine the comforts that reclaim
The soul from Satan's power ;
That make me blush for what I am,
And hate my sin the more.

'Tis joy enough, my All in All,
At thy dear feet to lie ;
Thou wilt not let me lower fall,
And none can higher fly.

LX. A LIVING AND A DEAD FAITH

THE Lord receives his highest praise
From humble minds and hearts sincere ;
While all the loud professor says
Offends the righteous Judge's ear.

To walk as children of the day,
To mark the precepts' holy light,
To wage the warfare, watch, and pray,
Show who are pleasing in his sight.

Not words alone it cost the Lord
To purchase pardon for his own ;
Nor will a soul by grace restored
Return the Saviour words alone.

With golden bells the priestly vest
And rich pomegranates bordered round
The need of holiness expressed,
And called for fruit as well as sound.

Easy indeed it were to reach
A mansion in the courts above,
If swelling words and fluent speech
Might serve instead of faith and love.

WILLIAM COWPER

But none shall gain the blissful place,
 Or God's unclouded glory see,
 Who talks of free and sovereign grace,
 Unless that grace has made him free !

LXI. ABUSE OF THE GOSPEL

Too many, Lord, abuse thy grace
 In this licentious day,
 And, while they boast they see thy face,
 They turn their own away.

Thy book displays a gracious light
 That can the blind restore ;
 But these are dazzled by the sight,
 And blinded still the more.

The pardon such presume upon
 They do not beg, but steal ;
 And when they plead it at thy throne,
 Oh ! where's the Spirit's seal ?

Was it for this, ye lawless tribe,
 The dear Redeemer bled ?
 Is this the grace the saints imbibe
 From Christ the living head ?

Ah, Lord, we know thy chosen few
 Are fed with heavenly fare ;
 But these,—the wretched husks they chew
 Proclaim them what they are.

The liberty our hearts implore
 Is not to live in sin ;
 But still to wait at Wisdom's door,
 Till Mercy calls us in.

LXII. THE NARROW WAY

WHAT thousands never knew the road !
 What thousands hate it when 'tis known !
 None but the chosen tribes of God
 Will seek or choose it for their own.

A thousand ways in ruin end,
One only leads to joys on high;
By that my willing steps ascend,
Pleased with a journey to the sky.

No more I ask or hope to find
Delight or happiness below;
Sorrow may well possess the mind
That feeds where thorns and thistles grow.

The joy that fades is not for me,
I seek immortal joys above;
There glory without end shall be
The bright reward of faith and love.

Cleave to the world, ye sordid worms,
Contented lick your native dust!
But God shall fight with all his storms
Against the idol of your trust.

LXIII. DEPENDENCE

To keep the lamp alive
With oil we fill the bowl;
'Tis water makes the willow thrive,
And grace that feeds the soul.

The Lord's unsparing hand
Supplies the living stream;
It is not at our own command,
But still derived from him.

Beware of Peter's word,
Nor confidently say,
"I never *will* deny thee, Lord,"—
But,—"*Grant* I never *may*."

Man's wisdom is to seek
His strength in God alone;
And even an angel would be weak
Who trusted in his own.

Retreat beneath his wings,
And in his grace confide!
This more exalts the King of kings
Than all your works beside.

WILLIAM COWPER

In Jesus is our store,
 Grace issues from his throne;
 Whoever says, "I want no more,"
 Confesses he has none.

LXIV. NOT OF WORKS

GRACE, triumphant in the throne,
 Scorns a rival, reigns alone;
 Come and bow beneath her sway,
 Cast your idol works away!
 Works of man, when made his plea,
 Never shall accepted be;
 Fruits of pride (vain-glorious worm!)
 Are the best he can perform.

Self, the god his soul adores,
 Influences all his powers;
 Jesus is a slighted name,
 Self-advancement all his aim:
 But when God the Judge shall come
 To pronounce the final doom,
 Then for rocks and hills to hide
 All his works and all his pride!

Still the boasting heart replies,
 "What! the worthy and the wise,
 Friends to temperance and peace,
 Have not these a righteousness?"
 Banish every vain pretence
 Built on human excellence;
 Perish everything in man,
 But the grace that never can.

LXV. PRAISE FOR FAITH

Of all the gifts thine hand bestows,
 Thou giver of all good!
 Not heaven itself a richer knows
 Than my Redeemer's blood.

Faith, too, the blood-receiving grace,
 From the same hand we gain;
 Else, sweetly as it suits our case,
 That gift had been in vain.

Till thou thy teaching power apply,
Our hearts refuse to see,
And, weak as a distempered eye,
Shut out the view of thee.

Blind to the merits of thy Son,
What misery we endure !
Yet fly that hand from which alone
We could expect a cure.

We praise thee, and would praise thee more,
To thee our all we owe ;
The precious Saviour, and the power,
That makes him precious too.

LXVI. GRACE AND PROVIDENCE

ALMIGHTY King ! whose wondrous hand
Supports the weight of sea and land ;
Whose grace is such a boundless store,
No heart shall break that sighs for more ;

Thy providence supplies my food,
And 'tis thy blessing makes it good ;
My soul is nourished by thy word :
Let soul and body praise the Lord !

My streams of outward comfort came
From him who built this earthly frame ;
Whate'er I want his bounty gives,
By whom my soul for ever lives.

Either his hand preserves from pain,
Or, if I feel it, heals again ;
From Satan's malice shields my breast,
Or overrules it for the best.

Forgive the song that falls so low
Beneath the gratitude I owe !
It means thy praise, however poor,
An angel's song can do no more.

LXVII. I WILL PRAISE THE LORD AT ALL TIMES

WINTER has a joy for me,
While the Saviour's charms I read,
Lowly, meek, from blemish free,
In the snowdrop's pensive head.

WILLIAM COWPER

Spring returns, and brings along
Life-invigorating suns :
Hark ! the turtle's plaintive song
Seems to speak his dying groans !

Summer has a thousand charms,
All expressive of his worth ;
'Tis his sun that lights and warms,
His the air that cools the earth.

What ! has Autumn left to say
Nothing of a Saviour's grace ?
Yes, the beams of milder day
Tell me of his smiling face.

Light appears with early dawn,
While the sun makes haste to rise ;
See his bleeding beauties drawn
On the blushes of the skies.

Evening with a silent pace,
Slowly moving in the west,
Shows an emblem of his grace,
Points to an eternal rest.

ANTI-THELYPHTHORA

A TALE IN VERSE

Ah miser,
Quantâ laboras in Charybdi !
Hor. *Od.* 1. 27.

AIRY del Castro was as bold a knight
As ever earned a lady's love in fight.
Many he sought, but one above the rest
His tender heart victoriously impressed ;
In fairy-land was born the matchless dame,
The land of dreams, Hypothesis her name.
There Fancy nursed her in ideal bowers,
And laid her soft in amaranthine flowers ;
Delighted with her babe, the enchantress smiled,
And graced with all her gifts the favourite child.
Her wooed Sir Airy, by meandering streams,
In daily musings and in nightly dreams ;
With all the flowers he found he wove in haste
Wreaths for her brow and girdles for her waist ;
His time, his talents, and his ceaseless care
All consecrated to adorn the fair ;
No pastime but with her he deigned to take,
And, if he studied, studied for her sake.
And, for Hypothesis was somewhat long
Nor soft enough to suit a lover's tongue,
He called her Posy, with an amorous art,
And graved it on a gem, and wore it next his heart.

But she, inconstant as the beams that play
On rippling waters in an April day,
With many a freakish trick deceived his pains,
To pathless wilds and unfrequented plains
Enticed him from his oaths of knighthood far,
Forgetful of the glorious toils of war.
'Tis thus the tenderness that Love inspires
Too oft betrays the votaries of his fires ;
Borne far away on elevated wings,
They sport like wanton doves in airy rings,
And laws and duties are neglected things.

Nor he alone addressed the wayward fair ;
Full many a knight had been entangled there ;

But still, whoever wooed her or embraced,
 On every mind some mighty spell she cast.
 Some she would teach (for she was wondrous wise,
 And made her dupes see all things with her eyes)
 That forms material, whatsoe'er we dream,
 Are not at all, or are not what they seem;
 That substances and modes of every kind
 Are mere impressions on the passive mind;
 And he that splits his cranium, breaks at most
 A fancied head against a fancied post.
 Others, that earth, ere sin had drowned it all,
 Was smooth and even as an ivory ball;
 That all the various beauties we survey,
 Hills, valleys, rivers, and the boundless sea,
 Are but departures from the first design,
 Effects of punishment and wrath divine.
 She tutored some in Dædalus's art,
 And promised they should act his wildgoose part,
 On waxen pinions soar without a fall,
 Swift as the proudest gander of them all.

But fate reserved Sir Airy to maintain
 The wildest project of her teeming brain;
 That wedlock is not rigorous, as supposed,
 But man, within a wider pale enclosed,
 May rove at will, where appetite shall lead,
 Free as the lordly bull that ranges o'er the mead;
 That forms and rites are tricks of human law,
 As idle as the chattering of a daw;
 That lewd incontinence and lawless rape
 Are marriage in its true and proper shape;
 That man by faith and truth is made a slave,
 The ring a bauble, and the priest a knave.

"Fair fall the deed!" the knight exulting cried,
 "Now is the time to make the maid a bride!"

'Twas on the noon of an autumnal day,
 October hight, but mild and fair as May;
 When scarlet fruits the russet hedge adorn,
 And floating films envelop every thorn;
 When gently as in June the rivers glide,
 And only miss the flowers that graced their side;
 The linnet twittered out his parting song,
 With many a chorister the woods among;
 On southern banks the ruminating sheep
 Lay snug and warm;—'twas Summer's farewell peep.
 Propitious to his fond intent there grew
 An arbour near at hand of thickest yew,
 With many a boxen bush close clipt between,

And phillyrea of a gilded green.

But what old Chaucer's merry page befits
The chaster muse of modern days omits.
Suffice it then in decent terms to say,
She saw,—and turned her rosy cheek away.
Small need of prayer-book or of priest, I ween,
Where parties are agreed, retired the scene,
Occasion prompt, and appetite so keen.
Hypothesis (for with such magic power
Fancy endued her in her natal hour)
From many a steaming lake and reeking bog
Bade rise in haste a dank and drizzling fog,
That curtained round the scene where they reposed,
And wood and lawn in dusky folds enclosed.

Fear seized the trembling sex; in every grove
They wept the wrongs of honourable love:

"In vain," they cried, "are hymeneal rites,
"Vain our delusive hope of constant knights;
"The marriage bond has lost its power to bind,
"And flutters loose, the sport of every wind.
"The bride, while yet her bride's attire is on,
"Shall mourn her absent lord, for he is gone,
"Sate of her and weary of the same,
"To distant wilds in quest of other game.
"Ye fair Circassians! all your lutes employ,
"Seraglios sing, and harems dance for joy!
"For British nymphs whose lords were lately true,
"Nymphs quite as fair, and happier once than you,
"Honour, esteem, and confidence forgot,
"Feel all the meanness of your slavish lot.

"O curst Hypothesis! your hellish arts
"Seduce our husbands, and estrange their hearts.
"Will none arise? no knight who still retains
"The blood of ancient worthies in his veins,
"To assert the charter of the chaste and fair,
"Find out her treacherous heart, and plant a dagger there?
"A knight (can he that serves the fair do less?)
"Starts at the call of beauty in distress;
"And he that does not, whatso'er occurs,
"Is recreant, and unworthy of his spurs."*

Full many a champion, bent on hardy deed,
Called for his arms and for his princely steed.
So swarmed the Sabine youth, and grasped the shield,
When Roman rapine, by no laws withheld,
Lest Rome should end with her first founders' lives,
Made half their maids, *sans* ceremony, wives.

* When a knight was degraded, his spurs were chopped off.

But not the mitred few ; the soul their charge,
 They left these bodily concerns at large ;
 Forms or no forms, pluralities or pairs,
 Right reverend sirs ! was no concern of theirs.
 The rest, alert and active as became
 A courteous knighthood, caught the generous flame ;
 One was accoutred when the cry began,
 Knight of the Silver Moon, Sir Marmadan.*

Oft as his patroness, who rules the night,
 Hangs out her lamp in yon cærulean height,
 His vow was (and he well performed his vow),
 Armed at all points, with terror on his brow,
 To judge the land, to purge atrocious crimes,
 And quell the shapeless monsters of the times.
 For cedars famed, fair Lebanon supplied
 The well-poised lance that quivered at his side ;
 Truth armed it with a point so keen, so just,
 No spell or charm was proof against the thrust.
 He couched it firm upon his puissant thigh,
 And darting through his helm an eagle's eye,
 On all the wings of chivalry advanced
 To where the fond Sir Airy lay entranced.

He dreamt not of a foe, or if his fear
 Foretold one, dreamt not of a foe so near.
 Far other dreams his feverish mind employed,
 Of rights restored, variety enjoyed ;
 Of virtue too well fenced to fear a flaw ;
 Vice passing current by the stamp of law ;
 Large population on a liberal plan,
 And woman trembling at the foot of man ;
 How simple wedlock fornication works,
 And Christians marrying may convert the Turks.

The trumpet now spoke Marmadan at hand,
 A trumpet that was heard through all the land.
 His high-bred steed expands his nostrils wide,
 And snorts aloud to cast the mist aside ;
 But he, the virtues of his lance to show,
 Struck thrice the point upon his saddle-bow ;
 Three sparks ensued that chased it all away,
 And set the unseemly pair in open day.
 "To horse !" he cried, "or, by this good right hand
 "And better spear, I smite you where you stand."

Sir Airy, not a whit dismayed or scared,
 Buckled his helm, and to his steed repaired,
 Whose bridle, while he cropped the grass below,
 Hung not far off upon a myrtle bough.

* "Monthly Review" for October.

He mounts at once,—such confidence infused
The insidious witch that had his wits abused ;
And she, regardless of her softer kind,
Seized fast the saddle and sprang up behind.
“ Oh, shame to knighthood ! ” his assailant cried ;
“ Oh, shame ! ” ten thousand echoing nymphs replied.
Placed with advantage at his listening ear,
She whispered still that he had nought to fear,
That he was cased in such enchanted steel,
So polished and compact from head to heel,
“ Come ten, come twenty, should an army call
Thee to the field, thou shouldst withstand them all.”

“ By Dian’s beams ! ” Sir Marmadan exclaimed,
“ The guiltiest still are ever least ashamed !
“ But guard thee well, expect no feigned attack ;
“ And guard beside the sorceress at thy back ! ”

He spoke indignant, and his spurs applied,
Though little need, to his good palfrey’s side :
The barb sprang forward, and his lord, whose force
Was equal to the swiftness of his horse,
Rushed with a whirlwind’s fury on the foe,
And, Phineas like, transfixed them at a blow.

Then sang the married and the maiden throng,
Love graced the theme, and harmony the song :
The Fauns and Satyrs, a lascivious race,
Shrieked at the sight, and, conscious, fled the place :
And Hymen, trimming his dim torch anew,
His snowy mantle o’er his shoulders threw ;
He turned, and viewed it oft on every side,
And, reddening with a just and generous pride,
Blessed the glad beams of that propitious day,
The spot he loathed so much for ever cleansed away.

IMPROMPTU ON READING THE CHAPTER ON POLYGAMY, IN
MR. MADAN’S THELYPHTHORA

If John marries Mary, and Mary alone,
’Tis a very good match between Mary and John.
Should John wed a score, oh, the claws and the scratches !
It can’t be a match—’tis a bundle of matches.

ON A REVIEW CONDEMNING THELYPHTHORA

I HAVE read the Review ; it is learned and wise,
Clear, candid, and witty—Thelyphtora dies.

MR. MADAN'S ANSWER TO NEWTON'S COMMENTS ON
THELYPHTHORA

M. quarrels with N., because M. wrote a book,
And N. did not like it, which M. could not brook ;
So he called him a bigot, a wrangler, a monk,
With as many hard names as would line a good trunk,
And set up his back, and clawed like a cat ;
But N. liked it never the better for that.

Now N. had a wife, and he wanted but one,
Which stuck in M.'s stomach as cross as a bone :
It has always been reckoned a just cause of strife
For a man to make free with another man's wife ;
But the strife is the strangest that ever was known,
If a man must be scolded for loving his own.

LOVE ABUSED

THE THOUGHT SUGGESTED BY THELYPHTHORA

WHAT is there in the vale of life
Half so delightful as a Wife,
When friendship, love, and peace combine
To stamp the marriage bond divine ?
The stream of pure and genuine love
Derives its current from above ;
And earth a second Eden shows,
Where'er the healing water flows :
But ah ! if, from the dykes and drains
Of sensual nature's feverish veins,
Lust, like a lawless headstrong flood,
Impregnated with ooze and mud,
Descending fast on every side,
Once mingles with the sacred tide,
Farewell the soul-enlivening scene !
The banks that wore a smiling green,
With rank defilement overspread,
Bewail their flowery beauties dead.
The stream polluted, dark and dull,
Diffused into a Stygian pool,
Through life's last melancholy years
Is fed with everflowing tears :
Complaints supply the zephyr's part,
And sighs that heave a breaking heart.

COWPER

FROM THE PORTRAIT IN OILS BY LEMUEL ABBOTT

P O E M S

B Y

WILLIAM COWPER,

Of the INNER TEMPLE, ESQ.

Sicut aquæ tremulum labris ubi lumen ahenis
Sole repercussum, aut radiantis imagine lunæ,
Omnia pervolat latè loca, jamque sub auras
Erigitur, summique ferit laquearia tecti. VIRG. ÆN. VIII.

So water trembling in a polished vase
Reflects the beam that plays upon its face,
The sportive light, uncertain where it falls,
Now strikes the roof, now flashes on the walls.

Nous sommes nés pour la vérité, et nous ne pouvons souffrir son
abord. les figures, les paraboles, les emblèmes, sont toujours
des ornements nécessaires pour qu'elle puisse s'annoncer, et soit
qu'on craigne qu'elle ne découvre trop brusquement le défaut
qu'on voudroit cacher, ou qu'enfin elle n'instruise avec trop
peu de ménagement, on veut, en la recevant, qu'elle soit
déguisée.

CARACCIOLI.

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. JOHNSON, No. 72, St. Paul's Church Yard.

1782.

[*Copy of title-page of Cowper's first Volume of Poems.*]

PREFACE, BY THE REV. JOHN NEWTON

WHEN an author, by appearing in print, requests an audience of the public, and is upon the point of speaking for himself, whoever presumes to step before him with a Preface, and to say, "Nay, but hear me first!" should have something worthy of attention to offer, or he will be justly deemed officious and impertinent. The judicious reader has, probably, upon other occasions, been beforehand with me in this reflection: and I am not very willing it should now be applied to me, however I may seem to expose myself to the danger of it. But the thought of having my own name perpetuated in connection with the name in the title-page is so pleasing and flattering to the feelings of my heart, that I am content to risk something for the gratification.

This Preface is not designed to commend the Poems to which it is prefixed. My testimony would be insufficient for those who are not qualified to judge properly for themselves, and unnecessary to those who are. Besides, the reasons which render it improper and unseemly for a man to celebrate his own performances, or those of his nearest relatives, will have some influence in suppressing much of what he might otherwise wish to say in favour of a friend, when that friend is indeed an *alter idem*, and excites almost the same emotions of sensibility and affection as he feels for himself.

It is very probable these Poems may come into the hands of some persons, in whom the sight of the author's name will awaken a recollection of incidents and scenes, which through length of time they had almost forgotten. They will be reminded of one, who was once the companion of their chosen hours, and who set out with them in early life in the paths which lead to literary honours, to influence and affluence, with equal prospects of success. But he was suddenly and powerfully withdrawn from those pursuits, and he left them without regret; yet not till he had sufficient opportunity of counting the cost, and of knowing the value of what he gave up. If happiness could have been found in classical attainments, in an elegant taste, in the exertions of wit, fancy, and genius, and in the esteem and converse of such persons as in these respects were most congenial with himself, he would have been happy. But he was not. —He wondered (as thousands in a similar situation still do) that he

should continue dissatisfied, with all the means apparently conducive to satisfaction within his reach. But in due time the cause of his disappointment was discovered to him—he had lived without God in the world. In a memorable hour, the wisdom which is from above visited his heart. Then he felt himself a wanderer, and then he found a guide. Upon this change of views, a change of plan and conduct followed of course. When he saw the busy and the gay world in its true light, he left it with as little reluctance as a prisoner, when called to liberty, leaves his dungeon. Not that he became a cynic or an ascetic:—a heart filled with love to God will assuredly breathe benevolence to men. But the turn of his temper inclining him to rural life, he indulged it, and the providence of God evidently preparing his way and marking out his retreat, he retired into the country. By these steps the good hand of God, unknown to me, was providing for me one of the principal blessings of my life; a friend and a counsellor, in whose company for almost seven years, though we were seldom seven successive waking hours separated, I always found new pleasure: a friend who was not only a comfort to myself, but a blessing to the affectionate poor people among whom I then lived.

Some time after inclination had thus removed him from the hurry and bustle of life, he was still more secluded by a long indisposition, and my pleasure was succeeded by a proportionable degree of anxiety and concern. But a hope that the God whom he served would support him under his affliction, and at length vouchsafe him a happy deliverance, never forsook me. The desirable crisis, I trust, is now nearly approaching. The dawn, the presage of returning day, is already arrived. He is again enabled to resume his pen, and some of the first fruits of his recovery are here presented to the public. In his principal subjects, the same acumen which distinguished him in the early period of life is happily employed in illustrating and enforcing the truths, of which he received such deep and unalterable impressions in his maturer years. His satire, if it may be called so, is benevolent, (like the operations of the skilful and humane surgeon, who wounds only to heal,) dictated by a just regard for the honour of God, an indignant grief excited by the profligacy of the age, and a tender compassion for the souls of men.

His favourite topics are least insisted on in the piece entitled *Table Talk*; which, therefore, with some regard to the prevailing taste, and that those who are governed by it may not be discouraged at the very threshold from proceeding farther, is placed first. In most of the larger Poems which follow, his leading design is more explicitly avowed and pursued. He aims to communicate his own perceptions of the truth, beauty, and influence of the religion of the Bible,—a religion, which, however discredited by the misconduct of many who have not renounced the Christian name,

proves itself, when rightly understood and cordially embraced, to be the grand *desideratum* which alone can relieve the mind of man from painful and unavoidable anxieties, inspire it with stable peace and solid hope, and furnish those motives and prospects which, in the present state of things, are absolutely necessary to produce a conduct worthy of a rational creature, distinguished by a vastness of capacity, which no assemblage of earthly good can satisfy, and by a principle and pre-intimation of immortality.

At a time when hypothesis and conjecture in philosophy are so justly exploded, and little is considered as deserving the name of knowledge which will not stand the test of experiment, the very use of the term *experimental*, in religious concerns, is by too many unhappily rejected with disgust. But we well know, that they who affect to despise the inward feelings which religious persons speak of, and to treat them as enthusiasm and folly, have inward feelings of their own, which, though they would, they cannot suppress. We have been too long in the secret ourselves, to account the proud, the ambitious, or the voluptuous, happy. We must lose the remembrance of what we once were, before we can believe that a man is satisfied with himself, merely because he endeavours to appear so. A smile upon the face is often but a mask worn occasionally and in company, to prevent, if possible, a suspicion of what at the same time is passing in the heart. We know that there are people, who seldom smile when they are alone, who therefore are glad to hide themselves in a throng from the violence of their own reflections; and who, while by their looks and their language they wish to persuade us they are happy, would be glad to change conditions with a dog. But in defiance of all their efforts, they continue to think, forebode, and tremble. This we know, for it has been our own state, and therefore we know how to commiserate it in others. From this state the Bible relieved us. When we were led to read it with attention, we found ourselves described,—we learnt the causes of our inquietude,—we were directed to a method of relief,—we tried, and we were not disappointed.

Deus nobis hæc otia fecit.

We are now certain that the Gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. It has reconciled us to God, and to ourselves, to our duty, and our situation. It is the balm and cordial of the present life, and a sovereign antidote against the fear of death.

Sed hæc. Some smaller pieces, upon less important subjects, close the volume. Not one of them, I believe, was written with a view to publication, but I was unwilling they should be omitted.

JOHN NEWTON.

CHARLES SQUARE, HOXTON,
February 18, 1782.

TABLE TALK

*Si te fortè mæse gravis uret sarcina chartæ,
Abjicito—HOR. Lib. i. Ep. 13.*

A. You told me, I remember, glory, built
On selfish principles, is shame and guilt;
The deeds that men admire as half divine,
Stark naught, because corrupt in their design.
Strange doctrine this! that without scruple tears
The laurel that the very lightning spares,
Brings down the warrior's trophy to the dust
And eats into his bloody sword like rust.

B. I grant that, men continuing what they are,
Fierce, avaricious, proud, there must be war; 10
And never meant the rule should be applied
To him that fights with justice on his side.

Let laurels, drenched in pure Parnassian dew,
Reward his memory, dear to every muse,
Who, with a courage of unshaken root,
In honour's field advancing his firm foot,
Plants it upon the line that justice draws,
And will prevail or perish in her cause.

'Tis to the virtues of such men man owes
His portion in the good that heaven bestows, 20
And when recording history displays
Feats of renown, though wrought in ancient days,
Tells of a few stout hearts that fought and died
Where duty placed them, at their country's side,
The man that is not moved with what he reads,
That takes not fire at their heroic deeds,
Unworthy of the blessings of the brave,
Is base in kind, and born to be a slave.

But let eternal infamy pursue
The wretch to nought but his ambition true, 30
Who, for the sake of filling with one blast
The post-horns of all Europe, lays her waste.
Think yourself stationed on a towering rock,
To see a people scattered like a flock,
Some royal mastiff panting at their heels,
With all the savage thirst a tiger feels,
Then view him self-proclaimed in a gazette
Chief monster that has plagued the nations yet!
The globe and sceptre in such hands misplaced,
Those ensigns of dominion, how disgraced! 40
The glass that bids man mark the fleeting hour,

And death's own scythe, would better speak his power.
 Then grace the bony phantom in their stead
 With the king's shoulder-knot and gay cockade ;
 Clothe the twin brethren in each other's dress,
 The same their occupation and success.

A. 'Tis your belief the world was made for man ;
 Kings do but reason on the self-same plan :
 Maintaining yours, you cannot theirs condemn,
 Who think, or seem to think, man made for them. 50

B. Seldom, alas ! the power of logic reigns
 With much sufficiency in royal brains.
 Such reasoning falls like an inverted cone,
 Wanting its proper base to stand upon.
 Man made for kings ! those optics are but dim
 That tell you so ;—say rather, they for him.
 That were indeed a king-ennobling thought,
 Could they, or would they, reason as they ought.
 The diadem with mighty projects lined,
 To catch renown by ruining mankind, 60
 Is worth, with all its gold and glittering store,
 Just what the toy will sell for, and no more.

Oh ! bright occasions of dispensing good,
 How seldom used, how little understood !
 To pour in virtue's lap her just reward ;
 Keep vice restrained behind a double guard ;
 To quell the faction that affronts the throne,
 By silent magnanimity alone ;
 To nurse with tender care the thriving arts,
 Watch every beam philosophy imparts ; 70
 To give religion her unbridled scope,
 Nor judge by statute a believer's hope ;
 With close fidelity and love unfeigned
 To keep the matrimonial bond unstained ;
 Covetous only of a virtuous praise ;
 His life a lesson to the land he sways ;
 To touch the sword with conscientious awe,
 Nor draw it but when duty bids him draw ;
 To sheath it in the peace-restoring close,
 With joy beyond what victory bestows,— 80
 Blest country, where these kingly glories shine,
 Blest England, if this happiness be thine.

A. Guard what you say : the patriotic tribe
 Will sneer, and charge you with a bribe.—*B.* A bribe ?
 The worth of his three kingdoms I defy
 To lure me to the baseness of a lie.
 And, of all lies (be that one poet's boast),
 The lie that flatters I abhor the most.

Those arts be theirs that hate his gentle reign,
But he that loves him has no need to feign. 90

A. Your smooth eulogium, to one crown addressed,
Seems to imply a censure on the rest.

B. Quevedo, as he tells his sober tale,
Asked, when in hell, to see the royal jail,
Approved their method in all other things,
"But where, good sir, do you confine your kings?"
"There," said his guide; "the group is full in view."
"Indeed!" replied the Don; "there are but few."
His black interpreter the charge disdained;—
"Few, fellow? There are all that ever reigned." 100

Wit, undistinguishing, is apt to strike
The guilty and not guilty, both alike.
I grant the sarcasm is too severe,
And we can readily refute it here,
While Alfred's name, the father of his age,
And the Sixth Edward's, grace the historic page.

A. Kings then at last have but the lot of all;
By their own conduct they must stand or fall.

B. True. While they live, the courtly laureate pays
His quit-rent ode, his pepper-corn of praise, 110
And many a dunce whose fingers itch to write,
Adds, as he can, his tributary mite;
A subject's faults a subject may proclaim,
A monarch's errors are forbidden game.
Thus, free from censure, overawed by fear,
And praised for virtues that they scorn to wear,
The fleeting forms of majesty engage
Respect, while stalking o'er life's narrow stage,
Then leave their crimes for history to scan,
And ask, with busy scorn, Was this the man? 120

I pity kings whom worship waits upon
Obsequious, from the cradle to the throne;
Before whose infant eyes the flatterer bows,
And binds a wreath about their baby brows;
Whom education stiffens into state,
And death awakens from that dream too late.
Oh! if servility with supple knees,
Whose trade it is to smile, to crouch, to please,
If smooth dissimulation, skilled to grace
A devil's purpose with an angel's face, 130
If smiling peeresses and simpering peers,
Encompassing his throne a few short years,
If the gilt carriage and the pampered steed,
That wants no driving and disdains the lead;
If guards, mechanically formed in ranks,

Playing, at beat of drum, their martial pranks,
Shouldering and standing as if struck to stone,
While condescending majesty looks on;
If monarchy consist in such base things,
Sighing, I say again, I pity kings !

140

To be suspected, thwarted, and withstood,
Even when he labours for his country's good,
To see a band, called patriot for no cause
But that they catch at popular applause,
Careless of all the anxiety he feels,
Hook disappointment on the public wheels,
With all their flippant fluency of tongue,
Most confident, when palpably most wrong,
If this be kingly, then farewell for me
All kingship, and may I be poor and free !

150

To be the Table Talk of clubs up stairs,
To which the unwashed artificer repairs
To indulge his genius after long fatigue
By diving into cabinet intrigue,
(For what kings deem a toil, as well they may,
To him is relaxation and mere play ;)
To win no praise when well-wrought plans prevail,
But to be rudely censured when they fail,
To doubt the love his favourites may pretend,
And in reality to find no friend,—
If he indulge a cultivated taste,
His galleries with the works of art well graced,
To hear it called extravagance and waste ;
If these attendants, and if such as these,
Must follow royalty, then welcome ease !
However humble and confined the sphere,
Happy the state that has not these to fear.

160

A. Thus men, whose thoughts contemplative have
dwelt

On situations they have never felt,
Start up sagacious, covered with the dust
Of dreaming study and pedantic rust,
And prate and preach about what others prove,
As if the world and they were hand and glove.
Leave kingly backs to cope with kingly cares,
They have their weight to carry, subjects theirs ;
Poets, of all men, ever least regret
Increasing taxes and the nation's debt.
Could you contrive the payment, and rehearse
The mighty plan, oracular, in verse,
No bard, howe'er majestic, old or new,
Should claim my fixed attention more than you.

170

180

B. Not Brindley nor Bridgewater would essay
 To turn the course of Helicon that way ;
 Nor would the Nine consent the sacred tide
 Should purl amidst the traffic of Cheapside,
 Or tinkle in 'Change Alley, to amuse
 The leathern ears of stock-jobbers and Jews.

A. Vouchsafe, at least, to pitch the key of rhyme
 To themes more pertinent, if less sublime.

When ministers and ministerial arts, 190
 Patriots who love good places at their hearts,
 When admirals extolled for standing still,
 Or doing nothing with a deal of skill,
 Generals who will not conquer when they may,
 Firm friends to peace, to pleasure, and good pay,
 When freedom wounded almost to despair,
 Though discontent alone can find out where,
 When themes like these employ the poet's tongue,
 I hear as mute as if a siren sung.

Or tell me, if you can, what power maintains 200
 A Briton's scorn of arbitrary chains ?
 That were a theme might animate the dead,
 And move the lips of poets cast in lead.

B. The cause, though worth the search, may yet elude
 Conjecture and remark, however shrewd.

They take, perhaps, a well-directed aim,
 Who seek it in his climate and his frame.
 Liberal in all things else, yet nature here
 With stern severity deals out the year. 210
 Winter invades the spring, and often pours
 A chilling flood on summer's drooping flowers ;
 Unwelcome vapours quench autumnal beams,
 Ungenial blasts attending curl the streams ;
 The peasants urge their harvest, ply the fork
 With double toil, and shiver at their work.

Thus with a rigour, for his good designed,
 She rears her favourite man of all mankind.
 His form robust and of elastic tone,
 Proportioned well, half muscle and half bone,
 Supplies with warm activity and force 220
 A mind well lodged, and masculine of course.

Hence liberty, sweet liberty, inspires
 And keeps alive his fierce but noble fires.
Patient of constitutional control,
 He bears it with meek manliness of soul ;
 But if authority grow wanton, woe
 To him that treads upon his free-born toe !
 One step beyond the boundary of the laws

Fires him at once in freedom's glorious cause.
 Thus proud prerogative, not much revered, 230
 Is seldom felt, though sometimes seen and heard ;
 And in his cage, like parrot fine and gay,
 Is kept to strut, look big, and talk away.

Born in a climate softer far than ours,
 Not formed like us, with such Herculean powers,
 The Frenchman, easy, debonair, and brisk,
 Give him his lass, his fiddle, and his frisk,
 Is always happy, reign whoever may,
 And laughs the sense of misery far away.
 He drinks his simple beverage with a gust, 240
 And feasting on an onion and a crust,
 We never feel the alacrity and joy
 With which he shouts and carols, *Vive le Roy*,
 Filled with as much true merriment and glee
 As if he heard the king say, "Slave, be free !"

Thus happiness depends, as nature shows,
 Less on exterior things than most suppose.
 Vigilant over all that He has made,
 Kind Providence attends with gracious aid,
 Bids equity throughout His works prevail, 250
 And weighs the nations in an even scale ;
 He can encourage Slavery to a smile,
 And fill with discontent a British isle.

A. Freeman and slave then, if the case be such,
 Stand on a level, and you prove too much.
 If all men indiscriminately share
 His fostering power and tutelary care,
 As well be yoked by despotism's hand,
 As dwell at large in Britain's chartered land.

B. No. Freedom has a thousand charms to show, 260
 That slaves, howe'er contented, never know.
 The mind attains beneath her happy reign
 The growth that nature meant she should attain.
 The varied fields of science, ever new,
 Opening and wider opening on her view,
 She ventures onward with a prosperous force,
 While no base fear impedes her in her course.
 Religion, richest favour of the skies,
 Stands most revealed before the freeman's eyes ;
 No shades of superstition blot the day, 270
 Liberty chases all that gloom away ;
 The soul, emancipated, unoppressed,
 Free to prove all things and hold fast the best,
 Learns much, and to a thousand listening minds
 Communicates with joy the good she finds.

Courage in arms, and ever prompt to show
 His manly forehead to the fiercest foe ;
 Glorious in war, but for the sake of peace,
 His spirits rising as his toils increase,
 Guards well what arts and industry have won, 280
 And freedom claims him for her first-born son.
 Slaves fight for what were better cast away,
 The chain that binds them, and a tyrant's sway,
 But they that fight for freedom undertake
 The noblest cause mankind can have at stake ;
 Religion, virtue, truth, whate'er we call
 A blessing, freedom is the pledge of all.
 O liberty ! the prisoner's pleasing dream,
 The poet's muse, his passion and his theme,
 Genius is thine, and thou art fancy's nurse, 290
 Lost without thee the ennobling powers of verse ;
 Heroic song from thy free touch acquires
 Its clearest tone, the rapture it inspires.
 Place me where winter breathes his keenest air,
 And I will sing if liberty be there ;
 And I will sing at liberty's dear feet
 In Afric's torrid clime or India's fiercest heat.

A. Sing where you please ; in such a cause I grant
 An English poet's privilege to rant.
 But is not freedom, at least is not ours, 300
 Too apt to play the wanton with her powers,
 Grow freakish, and o'erleaping every mound,
 Spread anarchy and terror all around ?

B. Agreed. But would you sell or slay your horse
 For bounding and curvetting in his course ;
 Or if, when ridden with a careless rein,
 He break away, and seek the distant plain ?
 No. His high mettle, under good control,
 Gives him Olympic speed, and shoots him to the goal.

Let discipline employ her wholesome arts ; 310
 Let magistrates alert perform their parts,
 Not skulk, or put on a prudential mask,
 As if their duty were a desperate task ;
 Let active laws apply the needful curb
 To guard the peace that riot would disturb,
 And liberty, preserved from wild excess,
 Shall raise no feuds for armies to suppress.
 When tumult lately burst his prison door,
 And set plebeian thousands in a roar,
 When he usurped authority's just place, 320
 And dared to look his master in the face,
 When the rude rabble's watchword was, " Destroy ! "

And blazing London seemed a second Troy,
 Liberty blushed and hung her drooping head,
 Beheld their progress with the deepest dread,
 Blushed that effects like these she should produce,
 Worse than the deeds of galley-slaves broke loose.
 She loses in such storms her very name,
 And fierce licentiousness should bear the blame.

Incomparable gem ! thy worth untold, 339
 Cheap, though blood-bought, and thrown away when sold ;
 May no foes ravish thee, and no false friend
 Betray thee, while professing to defend :
 Prize it, ye ministers ; ye monarchs, spare ;
 Ye patriots, guard it with a miser's care !

A. Patriots, alas ! the few that have been found,
 Where most they flourish, upon English ground,
 The country's need have scantily supplied ;
 And the last left the scene when Chatham died.

B. Not so. The virtue still adorns our age, 340
 Though the chief actor died upon the stage.
 In him, Demosthenes was heard again,
 Liberty taught him her Athenian strain ;
 She clothed him with authority and awe,
 Spoke from his lips, and in his looks gave law.
 His speech, his form, his action, full of grace,
 And all his country beaming in his face,
 He stood, as some inimitable hand
 Would strive to make a Paul or Tully stand.
 No sycophant or slave that dared oppose 350
 Her sacred cause but trembled when he rose,
 And every venal stickler for the yoke
 Felt himself crushed at the first word he spoke.

Such men are raised to station and command,
 When Providence means mercy to a land.
 He speaks, and they appear ; to Him they owe
 Skill to direct, and strength to strike the blow,
 To manage with address, to seize with power
 The crisis of a dark decisive hour.
 So Gideon earned a victory not his own, 360
 Subserviency his praise, and that alone.

Poor England ! thou art a devoted deer,
 Beset with every ill but that of fear.

The nations hunt ; all mark thee for a prey,
 They swarm around thee, and thou stand'st at bay,
 Undaunted still, though wearied and perplexed ;
 Once Chatham saved thee, but who saves thee next ?
 Alas ! the tide of pleasure sweeps along
 All that should be the boast of British song.

'Tis not the wreath that once adorned thy brow, 370
 The prize of happier times, will serve thee now.
 Our ancestry, a gallant Christian race,
 Patterns of every virtue, every grace,
 Confessed a God ; they kneeled before they fought,
 And praised Him in the victories He wrought.
 Now from the dust of ancient days bring forth
 Their sober zeal, integrity, and worth ;
 Courage, ungraced by these, affronts the skies,
 Is but the fire without the sacrifice.

The stream that feeds the well-spring of the heart 380
 Not more invigorates life's noblest part
 Than virtue quickens with a warmth divine
 The powers that sin has brought to a decline.

A. The inestimable estimate of Brown
 Rose like a paper-kite, and charmed the town ;
 But measures, planned and executed well,
 Shifted the wind that raised it, and it fell.
 He trod the very self-same ground you tread,
 And victory refuted all he said.

B. And yet his judgment was not framed amiss, 390
 Its error, if it erred, was merely this,—
 He thought the dying hour already come,
 And a complete recovery struck him dumb.

But that effeminacy, folly, lust,
 Enervate and enfeeble, and needs must,
 And that a nation shamefully debased
 Will be despised and trampled on at last,
 Unless sweet penitence her powers renew,
 Is truth, if history itself be true.
 There is a time, and justice marks the date, 400
 For long-forbearing clemency to wait ;
 That hour elapsed, the incurable revolt
 Is punished, and down comes the thunderbolt
 If mercy *then* put by the threatening blow,
 Must she perform the same kind office *now* ?
 May she ! and if offended heaven be still
 Accessible, and prayer prevail, she will.

'Tis not, however, insolence and noise,
 The tempest of tumultuary joys,
 Nor is it yet despondence and dismay, 410
 Will win her visits, or engage her stay ;
 Prayer only, and the penitential tear,
 Can call her smiling down, and fix her here.

But when a country (one that I could name)
 In prostitution sinks the sense of shame ;
 When infamous venality, grown bold,

Writes on his bosom, "*To be let or sold ;*"
When perjury, that heaven-defying vice,
Sells oaths by tale, and at the lowest price,
Stamps God's own name upon a lie just made, 420
To turn a penny in the way of trade ;
When avarice starves, and never hides his face,
Two or three millions of the human race,
And not a tongue inquires how, where, or when,
Though conscience will have twinges now and then ;
When profanation of the sacred cause
In all its parts, times, ministry, and laws,
Bespeaks a land, once Christian, fallen and lost
In all that wars against that title most ;
What follows next let cities of great name 430
And regions long since desolate, proclaim :
Nineveh, Babylon, and ancient Rome
Speak to the present times and times to come,
They cry aloud in every careless ear,
"Stop, while ye may, suspend your mad career !
O learn from our example and our fate,
Learn wisdom and repentance ere too late !"

Not only vice disposes and prepares
The mind that slumbers sweetly in her snares,
To stoop to tyranny's usurped command, 440
And bend her polished neck beneath his hand,
(A dire effect, by one of nature's laws
Unchangeably connected with its cause,)
But Providence Himself will intervene
To throw His dark displeasure o'er the scene.
All are His instruments ; each form of war,
What burns at home, or threatens from afar,
Nature in arms, her elements at strife,
The storms that overset the joys of life,
Are but His rods to scourge a guilty land, 450
And waste it at the bidding of His hand.
He gives the word, and mutiny soon roars
In all her gates, and shakes her distant shores ;
The standards of all nations are unfurled,
She has one foe, and that one foe, the world.
And if He doom that people with a frown,
And mark them with the seal of wrath, pressed down,
Obduracy takes place ; callous and tough,
The reprobated race grows judgment-proof ;
Earth shakes beneath them, and heaven roars above, 460
But nothing scares them from the course they love ;
To the lascivious pipe and wanton song,
That charm down fear, they frolic it along,

With mad rapidity and unconcern,
 Down to the gulf from which is no return.
 They trust in navies, and their navies fail,
 God's curse can cast away ten thousand sail !
 They trust in armies, and their courage dies ;
 In wisdom, wealth, in fortune, and in lies ;
 But all they trust in withers, as it must, 470
 When He commands, in whom they place no trust.
 Vengeance at last pours down upon their coast,
 A long despised but now victorious host ;
 Tyranny sends the chain that must abridge
 The noble sweep of all their privilege,
 Gives liberty the last, the mortal shock,
 Slips the slave's collar on, and snaps the lock.

A. Such lofty strains embellish what you teach ;
 Mean you to prophesy, or but to preach ?

B. I know the mind that feels indeed the fire 480
 The Muse imparts, and can command the lyre,
 Acts with a force, and kindles with a zeal,
 Whate'er the theme, that others never feel.
 If human woes her soft attention claim,
 A tender sympathy pervades the frame,
 She pours a sensibility divine
 Along the nerve of every feeling line.
 But if a deed not tamely to be borne,
 Fire indignation and a sense of scorn,
 The strings are swept with such a power, so loud, 490
 The storm of music shakes the astonished crowd.
 So when remote futurity is brought
 Before the keen inquiry of her thought,
 A terrible sagacity informs
 The poet's heart, he looks to distant storms,
 He hears the thunder ere the tempest lowers,
 And, armed with strength surpassing human powers,
 Seizes events as yet unknown to man,
 And darts his soul into the dawning plan.
 Hence, in a Roman mouth, the graceful name 500
 Of prophet and of poet was the same ;
 Hence British poets too the priesthood shared,
 And every hallowed Druid was a bard.
 But no prophetic fires to me belong,
 I play with syllables and sport in song.

A. At Westminster, where little poets strive
 To set a distich upon six and five,
 Where discipline helps opening buds of sense,
 And makes his pupils proud with silver pence,
 I was a poet too ; but modern taste 510

Is so refined and delicate and chaste
 That verse, whatever fire the fancy warms,
 Without a creamy smoothness has no charms.
 Thus, all success depending on an ear,
 And thinking I might purchase it too dear
 If sentiment were sacrificed to sound,
 And truth cut short to make a period round,
 I judged a man of sense could scarce do worse
 Than caper in the morris-dance of verse.

B. Thus reputation is a spur to wit, 520
 And some wits flag through fear of losing it.
 Give me the line that ploughs its stately course
 Like a proud swan, conquering the stream by force :
 That like some cottage beauty strikes the heart,
 Quite unindebted to the tricks of art.
 When labour and when dulness, club in hand,
 Like the two figures at St. Dunstan's, stand,
 Beating alternately, in measured time,
 The clock-work tintinnabulum of rhyme, 530
 Exact and regular the sounds will be,
 But such mere quarter-strokes are not for me.

From him who rears a poem lank and long,
 To him who strains his all into a song,
 Perhaps some bonny Caledonian air,
 All birks and braes, though he was never there ;
 Or having whelped a prologue with great pains,
 Feels himself spent, and fumbles for his brains ;
 A prologue interdashed with many a stroke,
 An art contrived to advertise a joke,
 So that the jest is clearly to be seen, 540
 Not in the words, but in the gap between ;
 Manner is all in all, whate'er is writ,
 The substitute for genius, sense, and wit.

To dally much with subjects mean and low
 Proves that the mind is weak, or makes it so.
 Neglected talents rust into decay,
 And every effort ends in push-pin play.
 The man that means success should soar above
 A soldier's feather, or a lady's glove,
 Else summoning the Muse to such a theme, 550
 The fruit of all her labour is whipt-cream.
 As if an eagle flew aloft, and then—
 Stooped from his highest pitch to pounce a wren.
 As if the poet, purposing to wed,
 Should carve himself a wife in gingerbread.

Ages elapsed ere Homer's lamp appeared,
 And ages ere the Mantuan swan was heard ;

To carry nature lengths unknown before,
 To give a Milton birth, asked ages more.
 Thus genius rose and set at ordered times,
 And shot a day-spring into distant climes;
 Ennobling every region that he chose,
 He sunk in Greece, in Italy he rose,
 And, tedious years of Gothic darkness past,
 Emerged all splendour in our isle at last.
 Thus lovely halcyons dive into the main,
 Then show far off their shining plumes again.

560

A. Is genius only found in epic lays?
 Prove this, and forfeit all pretence to praise.
 Make their heroic powers your own at once,
 Or candidly confess yourself a dunce.

570

B. These were the chief; each interval of night
 Was graced with many an undulating light;
 In less illustrious bards his beauty shone
 A meteor or a star; in these, the sun.

The nightingale may claim the topmost bough,
 While the poor grasshopper must chirp below.
 Like him unnoticed, I, and such as I,
 Spread little wings, and rather skip than fly;
 Perched on the meagre produce of the land,
 An ell or two of prospect we command,
 But never peep beyond the thorny bound,
 Or oaken fence, that hems the paddock round.

580

In Eden, ere yet innocence of heart
 Had faded, poetry was not an art;
 Language above all teaching, or if taught,
 Only by gratitude and glowing thought,
 Elegant as simplicity, and warm
 As ecstasy, unmanacled by form,
 Not prompted, as in our degenerate days,
 By low ambition and the thirst of praise,
 Was natural as is the flowing stream,
 And yet magnificent, a God the theme.
 That theme on earth exhausted, though above
 'Tis found as everlasting as His love,
 Man lavished all his thoughts on human things,
 The feats of heroes and the wrath of kings,
 But still while virtue kindled his delight,
 The song was moral, and so far was right.
 'Twas thus till luxury seduced the mind
 To joys less innocent, as less refined,
 Then genius danced a bacchanal, he crowned
 The brimming goblet, seized the thyrsus, bound
 His brows with ivy, rushed into the field

590

600

Of wild imagination, and there reeled
 The victim of his own lascivious fires,
 And, dizzy with delight, profaned the sacred wires.

Anacreon, Horace, played in Greece and Rome
 This Bedlam part ; and, others nearer home.
 When Cromwell fought for power, and while he reigned 610

The proud Protector of the power he gained,
 Religion harsh, intolerant, austere,
 Parent of manners like herself severe,
 Drew a rough copy of the Christian face
 Without the smile, the sweetness, or the grace.

The dark and sullen humour of the time
 Judged every effort of the Muse a crime ;

Verse in the finest mould of fancy cast,
 Was lumber in an age so void of taste :

And when the second Charles assumed the sway, 620

And arts revived beneath a softer day,
 Then like a bow long forced into a curve,

The mind, released from too constrained a nerve,
 Flew to its first position with a spring

That made the vaulted roofs of pleasure ring.

His court, the dissolute and hateful school

Of wantonness, where vice was taught by rule,

Swarmed with a scribbling herd as deep inlaid

With brutal lust as ever Circe made.

From these a long succession, in a rage 630

Of rank obscenity, debauched their age,

Nor ceased, till ever anxious to redress

The abuses of her sacred charge the press,

The Muse instructed a well-nurtured train

Of abler votaries to cleanse the stain,

And claim the palm for purity of song,

That lewdness had usurped and worn so long.

Then decent pleasantry and sterling sense,

That neither gave nor would endure offence,

Whipped out of sight, with satire just and keen, 640

The puppy pack that had defiled the scene.

In front of these came Addison. In him

Humour in holiday and slightly trim,

Sublimity and Attic taste, combined

To polish, furnish, and delight the mind.

Then Pope, as harmony itself exact,

In verse well-disciplined, complete, compact,

Gave virtue and morality a grace

That, quite eclipsing pleasure's painted face,

Levied a tax of wonder and applause, 650

Even on the fools that trampled on their laws.

But he (his musical finesse was such,
 So nice his ear, so delicate his touch)
 Made poetry a mere mechanic art,
 And every warbler has his tune by heart.
 Nature imparting her satiric gift,
 Her serious mirth, to Arbuthnot and Swift,
 With droll sobriety they raised a smile
 At folly's cost, themselves unmoved the while.
 That constellation set, the world in vain
 Must hope to look upon their like again.

660

A. Are we then left—*B.* Not wholly in the dark :
 Wit now and then, struck smartly, shows a spark,
 Sufficient to redeem the modern race
 From total night and absolute disgrace.
 While servile trick and imitative knack
 Confine the million in the beaten track,
 Perhaps some courser who disdains the road
 Snuffs up the wind and flings himself abroad.

670

Contemporaries all surpassed, see one,
 Short his career, indeed, but ably run.
 Churchill, himself unconscious of his powers,
 In penury consumed his idle hours,
 And, like a scattered seed at random sown,
 Was left to spring by vigour of his own.
 Lifted at length, by dignity of thought
 And dint of genius, to an affluent lot,
 He laid his head in luxury's soft lap,
 And took too often there his easy nap.
 If brighter beams than all he threw not forth,
 'Twas negligence in him, not want of worth.
 Surly and slovenly, and bold and coarse,
 Too proud for art, and trusting in mere force,
 Spendthrift alike of money and of wit,
 Always at speed, and never drawing bit,
 He struck the lyre in such a careless mood,
 And so disdained the rules he understood,
 The laurel seemed to wait on his command,
 He snatched it rudely from the Muse's hand.

680

Nature, exerting an unwearied power,
 Forms, opens, and gives scent to every flower,
 Spreads the fresh verdure of the field, and leads
 The dancing Naiads through the dewy meads ;
 She fills profuse ten thousand little throats
 With music, modulating all their notes,
 And charms the woodland scenes and wilds unknown
 With artless airs and concerts of her own ;
 But seldom (as if fearful of expense)

690

Vouchsafes to man a poet's just pretence.
 Fervency, freedom, fluency of thought,
 Harmony, strength, words exquisitely sought,
 Fancy that from the bow that spans the sky
 Brings colours dipt in heaven that never die,
 A soul exalted above earth, a mind
 Skilled in the characters that form mankind,
 And, as the sun, in rising beauty dressed,
 Looks to the westward from the dappled east,
 And marks, whatever clouds may interpose,
 Ere yet his race begins, its glorious close,
 An eye like his to catch the distant goal,
 Or ere the wheels of verse begin to roll,
 Like his to shed illuminating rays
 On every scene and subject it surveys,
 Thus graced, the man asserts a poet's name,
 And the world cheerfully admits the claim.

700

710

Pity religion has so seldom found
 A skilful guide into poetic ground !
 The flowers would spring where'er she deigned to stray,
 And every muse attend her in her way.
 Virtue indeed meets many a rhyming friend,
 And many a compliment politely penned,
 But unattired in that becoming vest
 Religion weaves for her, and half undressed,
 Stands in the desert shivering and forlorn,
 A wintry figure, like a withered thorn.
 The shelves are full, all other themes are sped,
 Hackneyed and worn to the last flimsy thread ;
 Satire has long since done his best, and curst
 And loathsome ribaldry has done his worst ;
 Fancy has sported all her powers away
 In tales, in trifles, and in children's play ;
 And 'tis the sad complaint, and almost true,
 Whate'er we write, we bring forth nothing new.
 'Twere new indeed to see a bard all fire,
 Touched with a coal from heaven, assume the lyre,
 And tell the world, still kindling as he sung,
 With more than mortal music on his tongue,
 That He who died below, and reigns above,
 Inspires the song, and that His name is Love.

720

730

For, after all, if merely to beguile
 By flowing numbers and a flowery style
 The tædium that the lazy rich endure,
 Which now and then sweet poetry may cure,
 Or if to see the name of idol self
 Stamped on the well-bound quarto, grace the shelf,

740

To float a bubble on the breath of fame,
 Prompt his endeavour and engage his aim,
 Debased to servile purposes of pride,
 How are the powers of genius misapplied !
 The gift whose office is the Giver's praise, 750
 To trace Him in His word, His works, His ways,
 Then spread the rich discovery, and invite
 Mankind to share in the divine delight,
 Distorted from its use and just design,
 To make the pitiful possessor shine,
 To purchase at the fool-frequented fair
 Of vanity, a wreath for self to wear,
 Is profanation of the basest kind,
 Proof of a trifling and a worthless mind.

A. Hail Sternhold then, and Hopkins hail ! B. Amen.
 If flattery, folly, lust employ the pen, 761
 If acrimony, slander and abuse,
 Give it a charge to blacken and traduce ;
 Though Butler's wit, Pope's numbers, Prior's ease,
 With all that fancy can invent to please,
 Adorn the polished periods as they fall,
 One madrigal of theirs is worth them all.

A. 'Twould thin the ranks of the poetic tribe
 To dash the pen through all that you proscribe.

B. No matter ;—we could shift when they were not ; 770
 And should, no doubt, if they were all forgot.

THE PROGRESS OF ERROR

Si quid loquar audiendum.—HOR. Lib. iv. Od. 2

SING, Muse (if such a theme, so dark, so long,
 May find a Muse to grace it with a song),
 By what unseen and unsuspected arts
 The serpent Error twines round human hearts ;
 Tell where she lurks, beneath what flowery shades
 That not a glimpse of genuine light pervades,
 The poisonous, black, insinuating worm
 Successfully conceals her loathsome form.
 Take, if ye can, ye careless and supine,
 Counsel and caution from a voice like mine ! 10
 Truths that the theorist could never reach,
 (And observation taught me, I would teach.
 Not all whose eloquence the fancy fills,
 Musical as the chime of tinkling rills,

Weak to perform, though mighty to pretend,
 Can trace her mazy windings to their end,
 Discern the fraud beneath the specious lure,
 Prevent the danger, or prescribe the cure.
 The clear harangue, and cold as it is clear,
 Falls soporific on the listless ear ;

20

Like quicksilver, the rhetoric they display
 Shines as it runs, but, grasped at, slips away.

Placed for his trial on this bustling stage,
 From thoughtless youth to ruminating age,
 Free in his will to choose or to refuse,
 Man may improve the crisis, or abuse ;
 Else, on the fatalist's unrighteous plan,
 Say, to what bar amenable were man ?
 With nought in charge, he could betray no trust,
 And, if he fell, would fall because he must ;
 If love reward him, or if vengeance strike,
 His recompense in both unjust alike.

30

Divine authority within his breast
 Brings every thought, word, action, to the test ;
 Warns him or prompts, approves him or restrains,
 As reason, or as passion, takes the reins.

Heaven from above, and conscience from within,
 Cry in his startled ear " Abstain from sin ! "

The world around solicits his desire, —

And kindles in his soul a treacherous fire ;

40

While, all his purposes and steps to guard,

Peace follows virtue as its sure reward,

And pleasure brings as surely in her train

Remorse and sorrow and vindictive pain.

Man, thus endued with an elective voice,
 Must be supplied with objects of his choice ;

Where'er he turns, enjoyment and delight,

Or present, or in prospect, meet his sight :

These open on the spot their honeyed store ;

Those call him loudly to pursuit of more.

50

His unexhausted mine the sordid vice

Avarice shows, and virtue is the price.

Here various motives his ambition raise,

Power, pomp, and splendour, and the thirst of praise ;

There beauty woos him with expanded arms ;

Ev'n Bacchanalian madness has its charms.

Nor these alone, whose pleasures less refined

Might well alarm the most unguarded mind,

Seek to supplant his inexperienced youth,

Or lead him devious from the path of truth ;

60

Hourly allurements on his passions press,

Safe in themselves, but dangerous in the excess.

Hark ! how it floats upon the dewy air !
 Oh what a dying, dying close was there !
 'Tis harmony from yon sequestered bower,
 Sweet harmony, that soothes the midnight hour !
 Long ere the charioteer of day had run
 His morning course, the enchantment was begun ;
 And he shall gild yon mountain's height again,
 Ere yet the pleasing toil becomes a pain. 70

Is this the rugged path, the steep ascent
 That virtue points to ? Can a life thus spent
 Lead to the bliss she promises the wise,
 Detach the soul from earth, and speed her to the skies ?
 Ye devotees to your adored employ,
 Enthusiasts drunk with an unreal joy,
 Love makes the music of the blest above,
 Heaven's harmony is universal love ;
 And earthly sounds, though sweet and well combined,
 And lenient as soft opiates to the mind, 80
 Leave vice and folly unsubdued behind.

Grey dawn appears ; the sportsman and his train
 Speckle the bosom of the distant plain ;
 'Tis he, the Nimrod of the neighbouring lairs ;
 Save that his scent is less acute than theirs,
 For persevering chase and headlong leaps,
 True beagle as the staunchest hound he keeps.
 Charged with the folly of his life's mad scene,
 He takes offence, and wonders what you mean ;
 The joy, the danger and the toil o'er pays ; 90
 'Tis exercise, and health, and length of days.
 Again impetuous to the field he flies ;
 Leaps every fence but one, there falls and dies ;
 Like a slain deer, the tumbrel brings him home,
 Unmissed but by his dogs and by his groom.

Ye clergy, while your orbit is your place,
 Lights of the world, and stars of human race ;
 But if eccentric ye forsake your sphere,
 Prodigious, ominous, and viewed with fear ;
 The comet's baneful influence is a dream ; 100
 Yours real and pernicious in the extreme.
 What then !—are appetites and lusts laid down
 With the same ease the man puts on his gown ?
 Will avarice and concupiscence give place,
 Charmed by the sounds—"Your reverence" or "Your grace ?"
 No. But his own engagement binds him fast ;
 Or, if it does not, brands him to the last
 What atheists call him, a designing knave,

A mere church juggler, hypocrite, and slave.
 Oh laugh, or mourn with me, the rueful jest, 110
 A cassocked huntsman, and a fiddling priest !
 He from Italian songsters takes his cue ;
 Set Paul to music, he shall quote him too.
 He takes the field, the master of the pack
 Cries—" Well done, saint ! " and claps him on the back.
 Is this the path of sanctity ? Is this
 To stand a way-mark in the road to bliss ?
 Himself a wanderer from the narrow way,
 His silly sheep, what wonder if they stray ?
 Go, cast your orders at your bishop's feet, 120
 Send your dishonoured gown to Monmouth Street ;
 The sacred function in your hands is made—
 Sad sacrilege !—no function, but a trade !

Occiduus is a pastor of renown ;
 When he has prayed and preached the sabbath down,
 With wire and catgut he concludes the day,
 Quavering and semiquavering care away.
 The full concerto swells upon your ear ;
 All elbows shake. Look in, and you would swear 130
 The Babylonian tyrant with a nod
 Had summoned them to serve his golden god ;
 So well that thought the employment seems to suit,
 Psaltery and sackbut, dulcimer and flute.
 Oh fie ! 'Tis evangelical and pure :
 Observe each face, how sober and demure !
 Ecstasy sets her stamp on every mien ;
 Chins fallen, and not an eye-ball to be seen.
 Still I insist, though music heretofore
 Has charmed me much, (not even Occiduus more,) 140
 Love, joy, and peace make harmony more meet
 For sabbath evenings, and perhaps as sweet.

Will not the sickliest sheep of every flock
 Resort to this example as a rock ;
 There stand and justify the foul abuse
 Of sabbath hours, with plausible excuse ?
 If apostolic gravity be free
 To play the fool on Sundays, why not we ?
 If he the tinkling harpsichord regards
 As inoffensive, what offence in cards ?
 Strike up the fiddles, let us all be gay ! 150
 Laymen have leave to dance, if parsons play.

O Italy ! thy sabbaths will be soon
 Our sabbaths, closed with mummary and buffoon.
 Preaching and pranks will share the motley scene,
 Ours parcelled out, as thine have ever been,

God's worship and the mountebank between.
 What says the prophet? Let that day be blest
 With holiness and consecrated rest.
 Pastime and business both it should exclude,
 And bar the door the moment they intrude ;
 Nobly distinguished above all the six
 By deeds in which the world must never mix.
 Hear him again. He calls it a delight,
 A day of luxury, observed aright,
 When the glad soul is made heaven's welcome guest,
 Sits banqueting, and God provides the feast.
 But triflers are engaged and cannot come ;
 Their answer to the call is—*Not at home.*

160

Oh the dear pleasures of the velvet plain,
 The painted tablets, dealt and dealt again !
 Cards with what rapture and the polished die
 The yawning chasm of indolence supply !
 Then to the dance, and make the sober moon
 Witness of joys that shun the sight of noon.
 Blame, cynic, if you can, quadrille or ball,
 The snug close party, or the splendid hall,
 Where Night, down-stooping from her ebon throne,
 Views constellations brighter than her own.

170

'Tis innocent and harmless, and refined,
 The balm of care, elysium of the mind.
 Innocent ! Oh, if venerable time
 Slain at the foot of pleasure be no crime,
 Then, with his silver beard and magic wand,
 Let Comus rise Archbishop of the land ;
 Let him your rubric and your feasts prescribe,
 Grand Metropolitan of all the tribe.

180

Of manners rough, and coarse athletic cast,
 The rank debauch suits Clodio's filthy taste.
 Rufflus, exquisitely formed by rule,
 Not of the moral but the dancing school,
 Wonders at Clodio's follies in a tone
 As tragical as others at his own.

190

He cannot drink five bottles, bilk the score,
 Then kill a constable, and drink five more ;
 But he can draw a pattern, make a tart,
 And has the ladies' etiquette by heart.
 Go, fool, and, arm in arm with Clodio, plead
 Your cause before a bar you little dread ;
 But know, the law that bids the drunkard die
 Is far too just to pass the trifier by.

200

Both baby-featured and of infant size,
 Viewed from a distance, and with heedless eyes,

Folly and innocence are so alike,
 The difference, though essential, fails to strike.
 Yet folly ever has a vacant stare,
 A simpering countenance, and a trifling air ;
 But innocence, sedate, serene, erect,
 Delights us by engaging our respect.

Man, nature's guest by invitation sweet,
 Receives from her both appetite and treat ; 210
 But, if he play the glutton and exceed,
 His benefactress blushes at the deed.
 For Nature, nice, as liberal to dispense,
 Made nothing but a brute the slave of sense.
 Daniel ate pulse by choice—example rare !
 Heaven blessed the youth, and made him fresh and fair.
 Gorgonius sits abdominous and wan,
 Like a fat squab upon a Chinese fan ;
 He snuffs far off the anticipated joy,
 Turtle and venison all his thoughts employ ; 220
 Prepares for meals as jockeys take a sweat,
 Oh nauseous !—an emetic for a whet !
 Will Providence o'erlook the wasted good ?
 Temperance were no virtue if He could.

That pleasures, therefore, or what such we call,
 Are hurtful, is a truth confessed by all ;
 And some, that seem to threaten virtue less,
 Still hurtful in the abuse, or by the excess.

Is man then only for his torment placed
 The centre of delights he may not taste ? 230
 Like fabled Tantalus, condemned to hear
 The precious stream still purling in his ear,
 Lip-deep in what he longs for, and yet curst
 With prohibition and perpetual thirst ?
 No, wrangler, destitute of shame and sense !
 The precept that enjoins him abstinence
 Forbids him none but the licentious joy,
 Whose fruit, though fair, tempts only to destroy.
 Remorse, the fatal egg by pleasure laid
 In every bosom where her nest is made, 240
 Hatched by the beams of truth, denies him rest,
 And proves a raging scorpion in his breast.
 No pleasure ? Are domestic comforts dead ?
 Are all the nameless sweets of friendship fled ?
 Has time worn out, or fashion put to shame
 Good sense, good health, good conscience, and good fame ?
 All these belong to virtue, and all prove
 That virtue has a title to your love.
 Have you no touch of pity that the poor

Stand starved at your inhospitable door ? 250
 Or if yourself, too scantily supplied,
 Need help, let honest industry provide.
 Earn, if you want ; if you abound, impart ;
 These both are pleasures to the feeling heart.
 No pleasure ? Has some sickly Eastern waste
 Sent us a wind to parch us at a blast ?
 Can British paradise no scenes afford
 To please her sated and indifferent lord ?
 Are sweet philosophy's enjoyments run
 Quite to the lees ? And has religion none ? 260
 Brutes capable should tell you 'tis a lie,
 And judge you from the kennel and the sty
 Delights like these, ye sensual and profane,
 Ye are bid, begged, besought to entertain ;
 Called to these crystal streams, do ye turn off
 Obscene, to swill and swallow at a trough ?
 Envy the beast then, on whom heaven bestows
 Your pleasures, with no curses in the close !
 Pleasure, admitted in undue degree,
 Enslaves the will, nor leaves the judgment free. 270
 'Tis not alone the grape's enticing juice
 Unnerves the moral powers, and mars their use ;
 Ambition, avarice, and the lust of fame,
 And woman, lovely woman, does the same.
 The heart, surrendered to the ruling power
 Of some ungoverned passion every hour,
 Finds, by degrees, the truths that once bore sway,
 And all their deep impression wear away.
 So coin grows smooth in traffic current passed
 Till Cæsar's image is effaced at last. 280
 The breach, though small at first, soon opening wide,
 In rushes folly with a full-moon tide :
 Then welcome errors, of whatever size,
 To justify it by a thousand lies.
 As creeping ivy clings to wood or stone,
 And hides the ruin that it feeds upon,
 So sophistry cleaves close to and protects
 Sin's rotten trunk, concealing its defects.
 Mortals whose pleasures are their only care,
 First wish to be imposed on, and then are ; 290
 And lest the fulsome artifice should fail,
 Themselves will hide its coarseness with a veil.
 Not more industrious are the just and true
 To give to virtue what is virtue's due,
 The praise of wisdom, comeliness, and worth,
 And call her charms to public notice forth,

Than vice's mean and disingenuous race
 To hide the shocking features of her face :
 Her form with dress and lotion they repair,
 Then kiss their idol, and pronounce her fair.

300

The sacred implement I now employ
 Might prove a mischief, or at best a toy ;
 A trifle if it move but to amuse ;
 But if to wrong the judgment and abuse,
 Worse than a poniard in the basest hand,
 It stabs at once the morals of a land.

Ye writers of what none with safety reads,
 Footing it in the dance that fancy leads,
 Ye novelists, who mar what ye would mend,
 Snivelling and drivelling folly without end,
 Whose corresponding misses fill the ream
 With sentimental frippery and dream,
 Caught in a delicate soft silken net
 By some lewd earl or rake-hell baronet ;
 Ye pimps, who, under virtue's fair pretence,
 Steal to the closet of young innocence,
 And teach her, unexperienced yet and green,
 To scribble, as you scribble, at fifteen ;
 Who, kindling a combustion of desire,
 With some cold moral think to quench the fire ;
 Though all your engineering proves in vain,
 The dribbling stream ne'er puts it out again ;
 Oh that a verse had power, and could command
 Far, far away these flesh-flies of the land,
 Who fasten without mercy on the fair,
 And suck, and leave a craving maggot there !
 Howe'er disguised the inflammatory tale,
 And covered with a fine-spun specious veil,
 Such writers and such readers owe the gust
 And relish of their pleasure all to lust.

310

320

330

But the Muse, eagle-pinioned, has in view
 A quarry more important still than you ;
 Down, down the wind she swims and sails away,
 Now stoops upon it, and now grasps the prey.

Petronius ! all the Muses weep for thee,
 But every tear shall scald thy memory.
 The Graces too, while virtue at their shrine
 Lay bleeding under that soft hand of thine,
 Felt each a mortal stab in her own breast,
 Abhorred the sacrifice, and cursed the priest.
 Thou polished and high-finished foe to truth,
 Grey-beard corrupter of our listening youth
 To purge and skim away the filth of vice,

340

That so refined it might the more entice,
 Then pour it on the morals of thy son
 To taint *his* heart, was worthy of *thine own*.
 Now while the poison all high life pervades,
 Write if thou canst one letter from the shades,
 One, and one only, charged with deep regret,
 That thy worst part, thy principles, live yet ; 350
 One sad epistle thence may cure mankind
 Of the plague spread by bundles left behind.

'Tis granted, and no plainer truth appears,
 Our most important are our earliest years.
 The mind, impressible and soft, with ease
 Imbibes and copies what she hears and sees,
 And through life's labyrinth holds fast the clue
 That education gives her, false or true.
 Plants raised with tenderness are seldom strong ;
 Man's coltish disposition asks the thong, 360
 And without discipline the favourite child,
 Like a neglected forester, runs wild.
 But we, as if good qualities would grow
 Spontaneous, take but little pains to sow ;
 We give some Latin, and a smatch of Greek,
 Teach him to fence and figure twice a week,
 And having done, we think, the best we can,
 Praise his proficiency and dub him man.

From school to Cam or Isis, and thence home,
 And thence with all convenient speed to Rome, 370
 With reverend tutor clad in habit lay,
 To tease for cash, and quarrel with all day ;
 With memorandum-book for every town,
 And every post, and where the chaise broke down ;
 His stock a few French phrases got by heart,
 With much to learn but nothing to impart,
 The youth, obedient to his sire's commands,
 Sets off a wanderer into foreign lands :
 Surprised at all they meet, the gosling pair
 With awkward gait, stretched neck, and silly stare, 380
 Discover huge cathedrals built with stone,
 And steeples towering high much like our own,
 But show peculiar light by many a grin
 At Popish practices observed within.

Ere long, some bowing, smirking, smart Abbé
 Remarks two loiterers that have lost their way,
 And being always primed with *politesse*
 For men of their appearance and address,
 With much compassion undertakes the task,
 To tell them more than they have wit to ask ; 390

Points to inscriptions wheresoe'er they tread,
 Such as when legible were never read,
 But being cankered now, and half worn out,
 Craze antiquarian brains with endless doubt ;
 Some headless hero or some Cæsar shows,
 Defective only in his Roman nose ;
 Exhibits elevations, drawings, plans,
 Models of Herculean pots and pans,
 And sells them medals, which, if neither rare
 Nor ancient, will be so, preserved with care.

400

Strange the recital ! from whatever cause
 His great improvement and new lights he draws,
 The squire once bashful is shamefaced no more,
 But teems with powers he never felt before :
 Whether increased momentum, and the force
 With which from clime to clime he sped his course,
 As axles sometimes kindle as they go,
 Chafed him and brought dull nature to a glow ;
 Or whether clearer skies and softer air,
 That make Italian flowers so sweet and fair,
 Freshening his lazy spirits as he ran,
 Unfolded genially and spread the man ;
 Returning, he proclaims by many a grace,
 By shrugs and strange contortions of his face,
 How much a dunce that has been sent to roam
 Excels a dunce that has been kept at home.

410

Accomplishments have taken virtue's place,
 And wisdom falls before exterior grace ;
 We slight the precious kernel of the stone,
 And toil to polish its rough coat alone.
 A just deportment, manners graced with ease,
 Elegant phrase, and figure formed to please,
 Are qualities that seem to comprehend
 Whatever parents, guardians, schools, intend.
 Hence an unfurnished and a listless mind,
 Though busy, trifling ; empty, though refined ;
 Hence all that interferes, and dares to clash
 With indolence and luxury, is trash ;
 While learning, once the man's exclusive pride,
 Seems verging fast towards the female side.

420

430

Learning itself, received into a mind
 By nature weak, or viciously inclined,
 Serves but to lead philosophers astray
 Where children would with ease discern the way.
 And of all arts sagacious dupes invent
 To cheat themselves and gain the world's assent,
 The worst is scripture warped from its intent,

The carriage bowls along, and all are pleased
 If Tom be sober, and the wheels well greased ;
 But if the rogue have gone a cup too far, 440
 Left out his linch-pin or forgot his tar,
 It suffers interruption and delay,
 And meets with hindrance in the smoothest way.
 When some hypothesis absurd and vain
 Has filled with all its fumes a critic's brain,
 The text that sorts not with his darling whim,
 Though plain to others, is obscure to him.
 The will made subject to a lawless force,
 All is irregular and out of course,
 And judgment drunk and bribed to lose his way 450
 Winks hard and talks of darkness at noon-day.

A critic on the sacred book should be
 Candid and learn'd, dispassionate and free ;
 Free from the wayward bias bigots feel,
 From fancy's influence, and intemperate zeal,
 But above all (or let the wretch refrain,
 Nor touch the page he cannot but profane)
 Free from the domineering power of lust ;
 A lewd interpreter is never just.

How shall I speak thee, or thy power address, 460
 Thou god of our idolatry, the press ?
 By thee religion, liberty, and laws
 Exert their influence and advance their cause ;
 By thee worse plagues than Pharaoh's land befell
 Diffused make earth the vestibule of hell.
 Thou fountain, at which drink the good and wise,
 Thou ever-bubbling spring of endless lies,
 Like Eden's dread probationary tree,
 Knowledge of good and evil is from thee.

No wild enthusiast ever yet could rest 470
 Till half mankind were like himself possessed.
 Philosophers who darken and put out
 Eternal truth by everlasting doubt,
 Church quacks with passions under no command,
 Who fill the world with doctrines contraband,
 Discoverers of they know not what, confined
 Within no bounds, the blind that lead the blind,
 To streams of popular opinion drawn,
 Deposit in those shallows all their spawn.
 The wriggling fry soon fill the creeks around, 480
 Poisoning the waters where their swarms abound ;
 Scorned by the nobler tenants of the flood,
 Minnows and gudgeons gorge the unwholesome food.
 The propagated myriads spread so fast,

Even Leuwenhoek himself would stand aghast,
Employed to calculate the enormous sum,
And own his crab-computing powers o'ercome.
Is this hyperbole? The world well known,
Your sober thoughts will hardly find it one.

Fresh confidence the speculatist takes
From every hair-brained proselyte he makes,
And therefore prints, himself but half deceived,
Till others have the soothing tale believed.

490

Hence comment after comment, spun as fine
As bloated spiders draw the flimsy line;
Hence the same word that bids our lusts obey
Is misapplied to sanctify their sway.

If stubborn Greek refuse to be his friend
Hebrew or Syriac shall be forced to bend;
If languages and copies all cry "No!"

500

Somebody proved it centuries ago.
Like trout pursued, the critic in despair
Darts to the mud and finds his safety there.
Women, whom custom has forbid to fly
The scholar's pitch (the scholar best knows why),
With all the simple and unlettered poor,
Admire his learning, and almost adore.

Whoever errs, the priest can ne'er be wrong
With such fine words familiar to his tongue.

Ye ladies! (for, indifferent in your cause,
I should deserve to forfeit all applause,)
Whatever shocks, or gives the least offence
To virtue, delicacy, truth, or sense
(Try the criterion, 'tis a faithful guide),
Nor has, nor can have, scripture on its side.

510

None but an author knows an author's cares,
Or fancy's fondness for the child she bears.
Committed once into the public arms,
The baby seems to smile with added charms:
Like something precious ventured far from shore,
'Tis valued for the danger's sake the more.

520

He views it with complacency supreme,
Solicits kind attention to his dream,
And daily, more enamoured of the cheat,
Kneels, and asks heaven to bless the dear deceit.
So one, whose story serves at least to show
Men loved their own productions long ago,
Wooed an unfeeling statue for his wife,
Nor rested till the gods had given it life.
If some mere driveller suck the sugared fib,
One that still needs his leading-string and bib,

530

And praise his genius, he is soon repaid
 In praise applied to the same part, his head :
 For 'tis a rule that holds for ever true,
 Grant me discernment, and I grant it you.

Patient of contradiction as a child,
 Affable, humble, diffident, and mild,
 Such was Sir Isaac, and such Boyle and Locke ;
 Your blunderer is as sturdy as a rock.

The creature is so sure to kick and bite, 540
 A muleteer's the man to set him right.
 First appetite enlists him truth's sworn foe,
 Then obstinate self-will confirms him so.
 Tell him he wanders, that his error leads
 To fatal ills, that though the path he treads
 Be flowery, and he see no cause of fear,
 Death and the pains of hell attend him there ;
 In vain : the slave of arrogance and pride,
 He has no hearing on the prudent side.

His still refuted quirks he still repeats, 550
 New raised objections with new quibbles meets,
 Till, sinking in the quicksand he defends,
 He dies disputing, and the contest ends.
 But not the mischiefs : they, still left behind,
 Like thistle-seeds are sown by every wind.

Thus men go wrong with an ingenious skill,
 Bend the straight rule to their own crooked will,
 And with a clear and shining lamp supplied,
 First put it out, then take it for a guide.
 Halting on crutches of unequal size, 560
 One leg by truth supported, one by lies,
 They sidle to the goal with awkward pace,
 Secure of nothing but to lose the race.

Faults in the life breed errors in the brain,
 And these, reciprocally, those again.
 The mind and conduct mutually imprint
 And stamp their image in each other's mint ;
 Each sire and dam of an infernal race
 Begetting and conceiving all that's base.

None sends his arrow to the mark in view 570
 Whose hand is feeble or his aim untrue ;
 For though ere yet the shaft is on the wing,
 Or when it first forsakes the elastic string,
 It err but little from the intended line,
 It falls at last far wide of his design.
 So he that seeks a mansion in the sky
 Must watch his purpose with a steadfast eye ;
 That prize belongs to none but the sincere,

The least obliquity is fatal here.

With caution taste the sweet Circæan cup :
 He that sips often at last drinks it up. 580
 Habits are soon assumed but when we strive
 To strip them off, 'tis being flayed alive.
 Called to the temple of impure delight,
 He that abstains, and he alone, does right.
 If a wish wander that way, call it home,
 He cannot long be safe whose wishes roam.
 But if you pass the threshold you are caught ;
 Die then, if power Almighty save you not !
 There hardening by degrees, till double steeled, 590
 Take leave of nature's God, and God revealed ;
 Then laugh at all you trembled at before,
 And, joining the freethinkers' brutal roar,
 Swallow the two grand nostrums they dispense,
 That scripture lies, and blasphemy is sense ;
 If clemency revolted by abuse
 Be damnable, then damned without excuse.

Some dream that they can silence when they will
 The storm of passion, and say, "*Peace, be still ;*"
 But "*Thus far and no farther,*" when addressed 600
 To the wild wave, or wilder human breast,
 Implies authority that never can,
 That never ought to be the lot of man.

But, Muse, forbear ! long flights forebode a fall,
 Strike on the deep-toned chord the sum of all.

Hear the just law, the judgment of the skies :
 He that hates truth shall be the dupe of lies ;
 And he that *will* be cheated to the last,
 Delusions strong as hell shall bind him fast.
 But if the wanderer his mistake discern, 610
 Judge his own ways, and sigh for a return,
 Bewildered once, must he bewail his loss
 For ever and for ever ? No—the Cross !
 There and there only (though the deist rave,
 And atheist, if earth bear so base a slave),
 There, and there only, is the power to save ;
 There no delusive hope invites despair,
 No mockery meets you, no deception there ;
 The spells and charms that blinded you before,
 All vanish there, and fascinate no more. 620

I am no preacher ; let this hint suffice,
 The Cross once seen is death to every vice ;
 Else He that hung there suffered all His pain,
 Bled, groaned and agonized, and died, in vain.

TRUTH.

Pensantur trutinâ.—HOR.

MAN, on the dubious waves of error tossed,
His ship half foundered, and his compass lost,
Sees, far as human optics may command,
A sleeping fog, and fancies it dry land :
Spreads all his canvas, every sinew plies,
Pants for it, aims at it, enters it, and dies.
Then farewell all self-satisfying schemes,
His well-built systems, philosophic dreams,
Deceitful views of future bliss, farewell !
He reads his sentence at the flames of Hell. 10

Hard lot of man ! to toil for the reward
Of virtue, and yet lose it !—Wherefore hard ?
He that would win the race, must guide his horse
Obedient to the customs of the course ;
Else, though unequalled to the goal he flies,
A meaner than himself shall gain the prize.
Grace leads the right way ; if you choose the wrong,
Take it and perish, but restrain your tongue ;
Charge not, with light sufficient, and left free
Your wilful suicide on God's decree. 20

Oh how unlike the complex works of man,
Heaven's easy, artless, unencumbered plan !
No meretricious graces to beguile,
No clustering ornaments to clog the pile ;
From ostentation as from weakness free,
It stands like the cærulean arch we see,
Majestic in its own simplicity.
Inscribed above the portal, from afar
Conspicuous as the brightness of a star,
Legible only by the light they give, 30
Stand the soul-quickenings words—BELIEVE AND LIVE.
Too many, shocked at what should charm them most,
Despise the plain direction and are lost.
“Heaven on such terms !” they cry with proud disdain,
“Incredible, impossible, and vain !”—
Rebel because 'tis easy to obey,
And scorn, for its own sake, the gracious way.
These are the sober, in whose cooler brains
Some thought of immortality remains ;
The rest too busy or too gay to wait 40

COWPER'S HOUSE AT OLNEY

FROM AN ENGRAVING BY GOODALL AFTER A DRAWING BY W. HARVEY



On the sad theme, their everlasting state,
Sport for a day and perish in a night,
The foam upon the waters not so light.

Who judged the Pharisee? What odious cause
Exposed him to the vengeance of the laws?
Had he seduced a virgin, wronged a friend,
Or stabbed a man to serve some private end?
Was blasphemy his sin? Or did he stray
From the strict duties of the sacred day?
Sit long and late at the carousing board? 50
(Such were the sins with which he charged his Lord.)
No—the man's morals were exact; what then?
'Twas his ambition to be seen of men;
His virtues were his pride! and that one vice
Made all his virtues gewgaws of no price;
He wore them as fine trappings for a show,
A praying, synagogue-frequenting beau.

The self-applauding bird, the peacock see,—
Mark what a sumptuous Pharisee is he!
Meridian sunbeams tempt him to unfold 60
His radiant glories, azure, green, and gold:
He treads as if, some solemn music near,
His measured step were governed by his ear,
And seems to say, "Ye meaner fowl, give place!
I am all splendour, dignity, and grace!"

Not so the pheasant on his charms presumes,
Though he too has a glory in his plumes.
He, Christian-like, retreats with modest mien
To the close copse or far sequestered green,
And shines without desiring to be seen. 70
The plea of works, as arrogant and vain,
Heaven turns from with abhorrence and disdain;
Not more affronted by avowed neglect
Than by the mere dissembler's feigned respect.
What is all righteousness that men devise,
What, but a sordid bargain for the skies?
But Christ as soon would abdicate His own
As stoop from heaven to sell the proud a throne.

His dwelling a recess in some rude rock,
Book, beads, and maple dish his meagre stock, 80
In shirt of hair, and weeds of canvas dressed,
Girt with a bell-rope that the Pope has blessed,
Ajust with stripes told out for every crime,
And sore tormented long before his time;
His prayer preferred to saints that cannot aid,
His praise postponed, and never to be paid;
See the sage hermit by mankind admired,

With all that bigotry adopts, inspired,
 Wearing out life in his religious whim,
 Till his religious whimsy wears out him.
 His works, his abstinence, his zeal allowed,
 You think him humble, God accounts him proud ;
 High in demand, though lowly in pretence,
 Of all his conduct this the genuine sense—
 My penitential stripes, my streaming blood,
 Have purchased heaven and prove my title good.

90

Turn eastward now, and fancy shall apply
 To your weak sight her telescopic eye.
 The Bramin kindles on his own bare head
 The sacred fire, self-torturing his trade ;
 His voluntary pains, severe and long,
 Would give a barbarous air to British song ;
 No grand inquisitor could worse invent
 Than he contrives to suffer well content.

100

Which is the saintlier worthy of the two ?
 " Past all dispute, yon anchorite," say you.
 Your sentence and mine differ. What's a name ?
 I say the Bramin has the fairer claim.
 If sufferings scripture nowhere recommends,
 Devised by self to answer selfish ends,
 Give saintship, then all Europe must agree,
 Ten starveling hermits suffer less than he.

110

The truth is (if the truth may suit your ear,
 And prejudice have left a passage clear)
 Pride has attained its most luxuriant growth,
 And poisoned every virtue in them both.
 Pride may be pampered while the flesh grows lean,
 Humility may clothe an English dean ;
 That grace was Cowper's—his confessed by all—
 Though placed in golden Durham's second stall.
 Not all the plenty of a bishop's board,
 His palace, and his lacqueys, and " my lord,"
 More nourish pride, that condescending vice,
 Than abstinence, and beggary, and lice :
 It thrives in misery, and abundant grows :
 In misery fools upon themselves impose.

120

But why before us Protestants produce
 An Indian mystic or a French recluse ?
 Their sin is plain ; but what have we to fear,
 Reformed and well instructed ? You shall hear.

130

Yon ancient prude, whose withered features show
 She might be young some forty years ago,
 Her elbows pinioned close upon her hips,
 Her head erect, her fan upon her lips,

Her eyebrows arched, her eyes both gone astray
 To watch yon amorous couple in their play,
 With bony and unkerchiefed neck defies
 The rude inclemency of wintry skies,
 And sails with lappet-head and mincing airs,
 Duly at clink of bell, to morning prayers.
 To thrift and parsimony much inclined,
 She yet allows herself that boy behind;
 The shivering urchin, bending as he goes,
 With slipshod heels, and dew-drop at his nose,
 His predecessor's coat advanced to wear,
 Which future pages are yet doomed to share,
 Carries her Bible tucked beneath his arm,
 And hides his hands to keep his fingers warm.

140

She, half an angel in her own account,
 Doubts not hereafter with the saints to mount,
 Though not a grace appears on strictest search,
 But that she fasts, and, *item*, goes to church.
 Conscious of age, she recollects her youth,
 And tells, not always with an eye to truth,
 Who spanned her waist, and who, where'er he came,
 Scrawled upon glass Miss Bridget's lovely name,
 Who stole her slipper, filled it with Tokay,
 And drank the little bumper every day.

150

Of temper as envenomed as an asp,
 Censorious, and her every word a wasp;
 In faithful memory she records the crimes,
 Or real or fictitious, of the times;
 Laughs at the reputations she has torn,
 And holds them dangling at arm's length in scorn.

160

Such are the fruits of sanctimonious pride,
 Of malice fed while flesh is mortified.
 Take, madam, the reward of all your prayers,
 Where hermits and where Bramins meet with theirs!
 Your portion is with them,—nay, never frown,
 But, if you please, some fathoms lower down.

170

Artist, attend!—your brushes and your paint—
 Produce them—take a chair,—now draw a Saint.
 Oh sorrowful and sad! the streaming tears
 Channel her cheeks,—a Niobe appears.
 Is this a saint? Throw tints and all away!
 True piety is cheerful as the day;
 Will weep indeed, and heave a pitying groan
 For others' woes, but smiles upon her own.

What purpose has the King of Saints in view?
 Why falls the gospel like a gracious dew?
 To call up plenty from the teeming earth,

180

Or curse the desert with a tenfold dearth ?
 Is it that Adam's offspring may be saved
 From servile fear, or be the more enslaved ?
 To loose the links that galled mankind before,
 Or bind them faster on, and add still more ?
 The freeborn Christian has no chains to prove,
 Or, if a chain, the golden one of love :
 No fear attends to quench his glowing fires,
 What fear he feels his gratitude inspires.
 Shall he, for such deliverance freely wrought,
 Recompense ill ? He trembles at the thought.
 His Master's interest and his own combined
 Prompt every movement of his heart and mind ;
 Thought, word, and deed, his liberty evince,
 His freedom is the freedom of a prince.

190

Man's obligations infinite, of course
 His life should prove that he perceives their force ;
 His utmost he can render is but small,
 The principle and motive all in all.

200

You have two servants—Tom, an arch sly rogue,
 From top to toe the Geta now in vogue ;
 Genteel in figure, easy in address,
 Moves without noise and swift as an express,
 Reports a message with a pleasing grace,
 Expert in all the duties of his place :
 Say, on what hinge does his obedience move ?
 Has he a world of gratitude and love ?
 No, not a spark—'tis all mere sharper's play ;
 He likes your house, your housemaid, and your pay ;
 Reduce his wages, or get rid of her,
 Tom quits you, with " Your most obedient, sir."

210

The dinner served, Charles takes his usual stand,
 Watches your eye, anticipates command ;
 Sighs if perhaps your appetite should fail ;
 And if he but suspects a frown, turns pale ;
 Consults all day your interest and your ease,
 Richly rewarded if he can but please ;
 And, proud to make his firm attachment known,
 To save your life would nobly risk his own.

220

Now, which stands highest in your serious thought ?
 " Charles, without doubt," say you,—and so he ought ;
 One act, that from a thankful heart proceeds,
 Excels ten thousand mercenary deeds.
 Thus Heaven approves as honest and sincere,
 The work of generous love and filial fear ;
 But with averted eyes the omniscient Judge
 Scorns the base hireling and the slavish drudge.

"Where dwell these matchless saints?" old Curio cries.
 Even at your side, sir, and before your eyes, 230
 The favoured few, the enthusiasts you despise;
 And pleased at heart because on holy ground
 Sometimes a canting hypocrite is found,
 Reproach a people with his single fall,
 And cast his filthy raiment at them all.
 Attend,—an apt similitude shall show
 Whence springs the conduct that offends you so.

See where it smokes along the sounding plain,
 Blown all aslant, a driving, dashing rain,
 Peal upon peal redoubling all around 240
 Shakes it again, and faster, to the ground;
 Now flashing wide, now glancing as in play,
 Swift beyond thought the lightnings dart away.
 Ere yet it came, the traveller urged his steed,
 And hurried, but with unsuccessful speed;
 Now drenched throughout, and hopeless of his case,
 He drops the rein, and leaves him to his pace.
 Suppose, unlooked for in a scene so rude,
 Long hid by interposing hill or wood,
 Some mansion neat and elegantly dressed, 250
 By some kind hospitable heart possessed,
 Offer him warmth, security, and rest;
 Think with what pleasure, safe and at his ease,
 He hears the tempest howling in the trees;
 What glowing thanks his lips and heart employ,
 While danger past is turned to present joy.

So fares it with the sinner, when he feels
 A growing dread of vengeance at his heels:
 His conscience, like a glassy lake before, 260
 Lashed into foaming waves begins to roar;
 The law grown clamorous, though silent long,
 Arraigns him, charges him with every wrong,
 Asserts the rights of his offended Lord,
 And death or restitution is the word:
 The last impossible, he fears the first,
 And, having well deserved, expects the worst.
 Then welcome refuge, and a peaceful home;
 Oh for a shelter from the wrath to come!

"Crush me, ye rocks; ye falling mountains, hide,
 Or bury me in ocean's angry tide— 270
 The scrutiny of those all-seeing eyes
 I dare not"—"And you need not," God replies;
 "The remedy you want I freely give:
 The book shall teach you; read, believe, and live!"
 'Tis done—the raging storm is heard no more,

Mercy receives him on her peaceful shore :
 And Justice, guardian of the dread command,
 Drops the red vengeance from his willing hand.
 A soul redeemed demands a life of praise ;
 Hence the complexion of his future days,
 Hence a demeanour holy and unspecked,
 And the world's hatred as its sure effect.

280

Some lead a life unblameable and just,
 Their own dear virtue their unshaken trust :
 They never sin—or if (as all offend)
 Some trivial slips their daily walk attend,
 The poor are near at hand, the charge is small,
 A slight gratuity atones for all.
 For though the Pope has lost his interest here,
 And pardons are not sold as once they were,
 No papist more desirous to compound
 Than some grave sinners upon English ground.
 That plea refuted, other quirks they seek—
 Mercy is infinite, and man is weak ;
 The future shall obliterate the past,
 And Heaven no doubt shall be their home at last.

290

Come then—a still small whisper in your ear—
 He has no hope that never had a fear ;
 And he that never doubted of his state,
 He may perhaps—perhaps he may—too late.

300

The path to bliss abounds with many a snare ;
 Learning is one, and wit, however rare.
 The Frenchman first in literary fame,
 (" Mention him, if you please—Voltaire ? "—The same,)
 With spirit, genius, eloquence supplied,
 Lived long, wrote much, laughed heartily, and died :
 The scripture was his jest-book, whence he drew
Bon mots to gall the Christian and the Jew ;
 An infidel in health, but what when sick ?
 Oh then, a text would touch him at the quick.
 View him at Paris in his last career ;
 Surrounding throngs the demigod revere,
 Exalted on his pedestal of pride,
 And fumed with frankincense on every side,
 He begs their flattery with his latest breath,
 And smothered in't at last, is praised to death.

310

Yon cottager who weaves at her own door,
 Pillow and bobbins all her little store,
 Content though mean, and cheerful if not gay,
 Shuffling her threads about the live-long day,
 Just earns a scanty pittance, and at night
 Lies down secure, her heart and pocket light.

320

She, for her humble sphere by nature fit,
Has little understanding, and no wit,
Receives no praise, but though her lot be such
Toilsome and indigent, she renders much;
Just knows, and knows no more, her Bible true—
A truth the brilliant Frenchman never knew;
And in that charter reads with sparkling eyes
Her title to a treasure in the skies.

330

O happy peasant! O unhappy bard!
His the mere tinsel, hers the rich reward;
He praised perhaps for ages yet to come,
She never heard of half a mile from home:
He lost in errors his vain heart prefers,
She safe in the simplicity of hers.

Not many wise, rich, noble, or profound
In science, win one inch of heavenly ground.
And is it not a mortifying thought
The poor should gain it, and the rich should not?
No; the voluptuaries, who ne'er forget
One pleasure lost, lose heaven without regret;
Regret would rouse them, and give birth to prayer,
Prayer would add faith, and faith would fix them there.

340

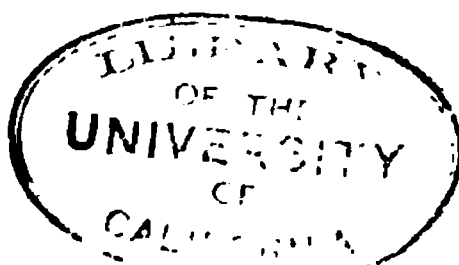
Not that the Former of us all in this,
Or aught He does, is governed by caprice:
The supposition is replete with sin,
And bears the brand of blasphemy burnt in.
Not so; the silver trumpet's heavenly call
Sounds for the poor, but sounds alike for all:
Kings are invited, and would kings obey,
No slaves on earth more welcome were than they:
But royalty, nobility, and state

350

Are such a dead preponderating weight,
That endless bliss (how strange soe'er it seem),
In counterpoise, flies up and kicks the beam.
'Tis open, and ye cannot enter—why?
"Because ye will not," Conyers would reply—
And he says much that many may dispute
And cavil at with ease, but none refute.

360

Oh blest effect of penury and want,
The seed sown there, how vigorous is the plant!
No soil like poverty for growth divine,
As leanest land supplies the richest wine.
Earth gives too little, giving only bread,
To nourish pride or turn the weakest head:
To them the sounding jargon of the schools
Seems what it is, a cap and bells for fools:
The light they walk by, kindled from above,



Shows them the shortest way to life and love : 370
 They, strangers to the controversial field
 Where deists always foiled yet scorn to yield,
 And never checked by what impedes the wise,
 Believe, rush forward, and possess the prize.

Envy, ye great, the dull unlettered small :
 Ye have much cause for envy ; but not all.
 We boast some rich ones whom the gospel sways,
 And one that wears a coronet and prays :
 Like gleanings of an olive-tree they show,
 Here and there one upon the topmost bough. 380

How readily upon the gospel plan
 That question has its answer—what is man ?
Sinful and weak, in every sense a wretch :
 An instrument whose chords, upon the stretch,
 And strained to the last screw that he can bear,
 Yield only discord in his Maker's ear :
 Once the blest residence of truth divine,
 Glorious as Solyma's interior shrine,
 Where, in his own oracular abode,
 Dwelt visibly the light-creating God ; 390
 But made long since, like Babylon of old,
 A den of mischiefs never to be told :

And she, once mistress of the realms around,
 Now scattered wide and nowhere to be found,
 As soon shall rise and re-ascend the throne,
 By native power and energy her own,
 As Nature, at her own peculiar cost,
 Restore to man the glories he has lost.
 Go bid the winter cease to chill the year,
 Replace the wandering comet in his sphere. 400
 Then boast (but wait for that unhopèd-for hour)
 The self-restoring arm of human power.

But what is man in his own proud esteem ?
 Hear him, himself the poet and the theme :
 A monarch clothed with majesty and awe,
 His mind his kingdom, and his will his law,
 Grace in his mien and glory in his eyes,
 Supreme on earth, and worthy of the skies,
 Strength in his heart, dominion in his nod,
 And, thunderbolts excepted, quite a god ! 410

So sings he, charmed with his own mind and form,
 The song magnificent—the theme a worm !
 Himself so much the source of his delight,
 His Maker has no beauty in his sight.
 See where he sits contemplative and fixed,
 Pleasure and wonder in his features mixed,

His passions tamed and all at his control,
 How perfect the composure of his soul !
 Complacency has breathed a gentle gale
 O'er all his thoughts, and swelled his easy sail : 420
 His books well trimmed, and in the gayest style,
 Like regimented coxcombs rank and file,
 Adorn his intellects as well as shelves,
 And teach him notions splendid as themselves :
 The Bible only stands neglected there,
 Though that of all most worthy of his care ;
 And, like an infant troublesome awake,
 Is left to sleep for peace and quiet sake.

What shall the man deserve of humankind,
 Whose happy skill and industry combined 430
 Shall prove (what argument could never yet)
 The Bible an imposture and a cheat ?
 The praises of the libertine professed,
 The worst of men, and curses of the best.
 Where should the living, weeping o'er his woes—
 The dying, trembling at the awful close,—
 Where the betrayed, forsaken, and oppressed,
 The thousands whom the world forbids to rest,—
 Where should they find (those comforts at an end
 The Scripture yields), or hope to find, a friend ? 440
 Sorrow might muse herself to madness then,
 And, seeking exile from the sight of men,
 Bury herself in solitude profound,
 Grow frantic with her pangs, and bite the ground.
 Thus often Unbelief, grown sick of life,
 Flies to the tempting pool, or felon knife.
 The jury meet, the coroner is short,
 And lunacy the verdict of the court :
 Reverse the sentence, let the truth be known,
 Such lunacy is ignorance alone ; 450
 They knew not, what some bishops may not know,
 That Scripture is the only cure of woe ;
 That field of promise, how it flings abroad
 Its odour o'er the Christian's thorny road !
 The soul, reposing on assured relief,
 Feels herself happy amidst all her grief,
 Forgets her labour as she toils along,
 Weeps tears of joy, and bursts into a song.

But the same word, that, like the polished share,
 Ploughs up the roots of a believer's care, 460
 Kills too the flowery weeds, where'er they grow,
 That bind the sinner's bacchanalian brow.
 Oh that unwelcome voice of heavenly love,

Sad messenger of mercy from above !
 How does it grate upon his thankless ear,
 Crippling his pleasures with the cramp of fear !
 His will and judgment at continual strife,
 That civil war embitters all his life :
 In vain he points his powers against the skies,
 In vain he closes or averts his eyes,
 Truth will intrude—she bids him yet beware ;
 And shakes the sceptic in the scorner's chair.

470

Though various foes against the truth combine,
 Pride above all opposes her design ;
 Pride, of a growth superior to the rest,
 The subtlest serpent with the loftiest crest,
 Swells at the thought, and, kindling into rage,
 Would hiss the cherub Mercy from the stage.

“ And is the soul indeed so lost ! ”—she cries,
 “ Fallen from her glory and too weak to rise !
 Torpid and dull beneath a frozen zone,
 Has she no spark that may be deemed her own ?
 Grant her indebted to what zealots call
 Grace undeserved, yet surely not for all ;
 Some beams of rectitude she yet displays,
 Some love of virtue, and some power to praise ;
 Can lift herself above corporeal things,
 And, soaring on her own unborrowed wings,
 Possess herself of all that's good or true,
 Assert the skies, and vindicate her due.
 Past indiscretion is a venial crime,
 And if the youth, unmellowed yet by time,
 Bore on his branch luxuriant then and rude
 Fruits of a blighted size, austere and crude,
 Maturer years shall happier stores produce,
 And meliorate the well-concocted juice.
 Then, conscious of her meritorious zeal,
 To justice she may make her bold appeal,
 And leave to mercy, with a tranquil mind,
 The worthless and unfruitful of mankind.”

480

490

500

Hear then how Mercy, slighted and defied,
 Retorts the affront against the crown of Pride.

“ Perish the virtue, as it ought, abhorred,
 And the fool with it, that insults his Lord.
 The atonement a Redeemer's love has wrought,
 Is not for you,—the righteous need it not.
 Seest thou yon harlot wooing all she meets,
 The worn-out nuisance of the public streets,
 Herself from morn to night, from night to morn,
 Her own abhorrence, and as much your scorn :

510

The gracious shower, unlimited and free,
 Shall fall on her, when Heaven denies it thee.
 Of all that wisdom dictates this the drift,
 That man is dead in sin, and life a gift."

"Is virtue then, unless of Christian growth,
 Mere fallacy, or foolishness, or both ?

Ten thousand sages lost in endless woe,

For ignorance of what they could not know ? "

That speech betrays at once a bigot's tongue,

Charge not a God with such outrageous wrong !

520

Truly not I—the partial light men have,

My creed persuades me, well employed, may save ;

While he that scorns the noonday beam, perverse,

Shall find the blessing unimproved a curse.

Let heathen worthies, whose exalted mind

Left sensuality and dross behind,

Possess for me their undisputed lot,

And take unenvied the reward they sought ;

But still in virtue of a Saviour's plea ;

Not blind by choice, but destined not to see.

530

Their fortitude and wisdom were a flame

Celestial, though they knew not whence it came,

Derived from the same source of light and grace

That guides the Christian in his swifter race :

Their judge was conscience, and her rule their law ;

That rule, pursued with reverence and with awe,

Led them, however faltering, faint, and slow,

From what they knew, to what they wished to know.

But let not him that shares a brighter day

Traduce the splendour of a noontide ray,

540

Prefer the twilight of a darker time,

And deem his base stupidity no crime ;

The wretch that slights the bounty of the skies,

And sinks while favoured with the means to rise,

Shall find them rated at their full amount,

The good he scorned all carried to account.

Marshalling all his terrors as he came,

Thunder and earthquake, and devouring flame,

From Sinai's top Jehovah gave the law,

Life for obedience, death for every flaw.

550

When the great Sovereign would His will express,

He gives a perfect rule ; what can He less ?

And guards it with a sanction as severe

As vengeance can inflict, or sinners fear :

Else his own glorious rights he would disclaim,

And man might safely trifle with his name.

He bids him glow with unremitting love

To all on earth, and to Himself above ;
 Condemns the injurious deed, the slanderous tongue,
 The thought that meditates a brother's wrong : 560
 Brings not alone the more conspicuous part,
 His conduct, to the test, but tries his heart.

Hark ! universal Nature shook and groaned,
 'Twas the last trumpet—see the Judge enthroned :
 Rouse all your courage at your utmost need,
 Now summon every virtue, stand and plead.
 What ! silent ? Is your boasting heard no more ?
 That self-renouncing wisdom, learned before,
 Had shed immortal glories on your brow,
 That all your virtues cannot purchase now. 570

All joy to the believer ! he can speak—
 Trembling yet happy, confident yet meek,—
 “ Since the dear hour that brought me to thy foot,
 And cut up all my follies by the root,
 I never trusted in an arm but thine,
 Nor hoped, but in thy righteousness divine :
 My prayers and alms, imperfect and defiled,
 Were but the feeble efforts of a child ;
 Howe'er performed, it was their brightest part,
 That they proceeded from a grateful heart ; 580
 Cleansed in thine own all-purifying blood,
 Forgive their evil, and accept their good ;
 I cast them at thy feet—my only plea
 Is what it was, dependence upon Thee,
 While struggling in the vale of tears below,
 That never failed, nor shall it fail me now.”

Angelic gratulations rend the skies,
 Pride falls unpitied, never more to rise,
 Humility is crowned, and faith receives the prize.

EXPOSTULATION.

Tantane, tam patiens, nullo certamine tolli
 Dona sines ?—VIRGIL.

Why weeps the Muse for England ? What appears
 In England's case to move the Muse to tears ?
 From side to side of her delightful isle
 Is she not clothed with a perpetual smile ?
 Can nature add a charm, or art confer
 A new-found luxury not seen in her ?
 Where under heaven is pleasure more pursued,

Or where does cold reflection less intrude ?
Her fields a rich expanse of wavy corn,
Poured out from Plenty's overflowing horn ; 10
Ambrosial gardens, in which Art supplies
The fervour and the force of Indian skies ;
Her peaceful shores, where busy Commerce waits
To pour his golden tide through all her gates ;
Whom fiery suns, that scorch the russet spice
Of Eastern groves, and oceans floored with ice,
Forbid in vain to push his daring way
To darker climes, or climes of brighter day ;
Whom the winds waft where'er the billows roll,
From the world's girdle to the frozen pole ; 20
The chariots bounding in her wheel-worn streets,
Her vaults below, where every vintage meets ;
Her theatres, her revels, and her sports ;
The scenes to which not youth alone resorts,
But age, in spite of weakness and of pain,
Still haunts, in hope to dream of youth again ;
All speak her happy : let the Muse look round
From East to West, no sorrow can be found :
Or only what, in cottages confined,
Sighs unregarded to the passing wind. 30
Then wherefore weep for England ? What appears
In England's case to move the Muse to tears ?
The prophet wept for Israel ; wished his eyes
Were fountains fed with infinite supplies :
For Israel dealt in robbery and wrong ;
There were the scorner's and the slanderer's tongue,
Oaths used as playthings or convenient tools,
As interest biassed knaves, or fashion fools ;
Adultery neighing at his neighbour's door ;
Oppression labouring hard to grind the poor ; 40
The partial balance, and deceitful weight ;
The treacherous smile, a mask for secret hate,
Hypocrisy, formality in prayer,
And the dull service of the lip, were there.
Her women insolent and self-caressed,
By vanity's unwearied finger dressed,
Forgot the blush, that virgin fears impart
To modest cheeks, and borrowed one from art ;
Were just such trifles without worth or use,
As silly pride and idleness produce ; 50
Curled, scented, furbelowed and flounced around,
With feet too delicate to touch the ground,
They stretched the neck, and rolled the wanton eye,
And sighed for every fool that fluttered by.

He saw his people slaves to every lust,
 Lewd, avaricious, arrogant, unjust ;
 He heard the wheels of an avenging God
 Groan heavily along the distant road ;
 Saw Babylon set wide her two-leaved brass
 To let the military deluge pass ;
 Jerusalem a prey, her glory soiled,
 Her princes captive, and her treasures spoiled ;
 Wept till all Israel heard his bitter cry,
 Stamped with his foot, and smote upon his thigh :
 But wept, and stamped, and smote his thigh in vain ;
 Pleasure is deaf when told of future pain,
 And sounds prophetic are too rough to suit
 Ears long accustomed to the pleasing lute :
 They scorned his inspiration and his theme,
 Pronounced him frantic, and his fears a dream ;
 With self-indulgence winged the fleeting hours,
 Till the foe found them, and down fell the towers.

60

70

Long time Assyria bound them in her chain,
 Till penitence had purged the public stain,
 And Cyrus, with relenting pity moved,
 Returned them happy to the land they loved ;
 There, proof against prosperity, awhile
 They stood the test of her ensnaring smile,
 And had the grace in scenes of peace to show
 The virtue they had learned in scenes of woe.
 But man is frail, and can but ill sustain
 A long immunity from grief and pain,
 And after all the joys that plenty leads
 With tiptoe step vice silently succeeds.

80

When he that ruled them with a shepherd's rod,
 In form a man, in dignity a God,
 Came, not expected in that humble guise,
 To sift, and search them with unerring eyes,
 He found, concealed beneath a fair outside,
 The filth of rottenness and worm of pride ;
 Their piety a system of deceit,
 Scripture employed to sanctify the cheat ;
 The pharisee the dupe of his own art,
 Self-idolized, and yet a knave at heart.

90

When nations are to perish in their sins,
 'Tis in the church the leprosy begins ;
 The priest, whose office is with zeal sincere
 To watch the fountain, and preserve it clear,
 Carelessly nods and sleeps upon the brink,
 While others poison what the flock must drink ;
 Or, waking at the call of lust alone,

100

Infuses lies and errors of his own ;
His unsuspecting sheep believe it pure,
And, tainted by the very means of cure,
Catch from each other a contagious spot,
The foul forerunner of a general rot.
Then truth is hushed, that heresy may preach ;
And all is trash that reason cannot reach :
Then God's own image on the soul impressed
Becomes a mockery and a standing jest ; 110
And faith, the root whence only can arise
The graces of a life that wins the skies,
Loses at once all value and esteem,
Pronounced by greybeards a pernicious dream :
Then ceremony leads her bigots forth,
Prepared to fight for shadows of no worth ;
While truths, on which eternal things depend,
Find not, or hardly find, a single friend.—
As soldiers watch the signal of command,
They learn to bow, to kneel, to sit, to stand, 120
Happy to fill religion's vacant place
With hollow form, and gesture, and grimace.

Such, when the Teacher of his church was there,
People and priest, the sons of Israel were ;
Stiff in the letter, lax in the design
And import of their oracles divine ;
Their learning legendary, false, absurd,
And yet exalted above God's own word ;
They drew a curse from an intended good,
Puffed up with gifts they never understood. 130
He judged them with as terrible a frown,
As if not love, but wrath, had brought him down :
Yet he was gentle as soft summer airs,
Had grace for others' sins, but none for theirs ;
Through all he spoke a noble plainness ran—
Rhetoric is artifice, the work of man ;
And tricks and turns, that fancy may devise,
Are far too mean for Him that rules the skies.
The astonished vulgar trembled while he tore
The mask from faces never seen before ; 140
He stripped the impostors in the noonday sun,
Showed that they followed all they seemed to shun ;
Their prayers made public, their excesses kept
As private as the chambers where they slept ;
The temple and its holy rites profaned
By mummeries he that dwelt in it disdained ;
Uplifted hands, that at convenient times
Could act extortion and the worst of crimes,

Washed with a neatness scrupulously nice,
 And free from every taint but that of vice. 150
 Judgment, however tardy, mends her pace
 When obstinacy once has conquered grace.
 They saw distemper healed, and life restored,
 In answer to the fiat of his word ;
 Confessed the wonder, and with daring tongue
 Blasphemed the authority from which it sprung,
 They knew, by sure prognostics seen on high,
 The future tone and temper of the sky,
 But, grave dissemblers ! could not understand
 That sin let loose speaks punishment at hand. 160
 Ask now of history's authentic page,
 And call up evidence from every age ;
 Display with busy and laborious hand
 The blessings of the most indebted land ;
 What nation will you find, whose annals prove
 So rich an interest in Almighty love ?
 Where dwell they now ? Where dwelt in ancient day
 A people planted, watered, blest as they ?
 Let Egypt's plagues and Canaan's woes proclaim
 The favours poured upon the Jewish name ; 170
 Their freedom purchased for them at the cost
 Of all their hard oppressors valued most ;
 Their title to a country not their own
 Made sure by prodigies till then unknown ;
 For them the state they left made waste and void ;
 For them the states to which they went destroyed ;
 A cloud to measure out their march by day,
 By night a fire to cheer the gloomy way ;
 That moving signal summoning, when best,
 Their host to move, and when it stayed, to rest. 180
 For them the rocks dissolved into a flood,
 The dews condensed into angelic food,
 Their very garments sacred, old yet new,
 And time forbid to touch them as he flew ;
 Streams, swelled above the bank, enjoined to stand
 While they passed through to their appointed land ;
 Their leader armed with meekness, zeal, and love,
 And graced with clear credentials from above ;
 Themselves secured beneath the Almighty wing,
 Their God their captain, lawgiver, and king ; 190
 Crowned with a thousand victories, and at last
 Lords of the conquered soil, there rooted fast,
 In peace possessing what they won by war,
 Their name far published, and revered as far ;
 Where will you find a race like theirs, endowed

With all that man e'er wished, or heaven bestowed?

They, and they only, amongst all mankind
Received the transcript of the eternal mind;
Were trusted with his own engraven laws,
And constituted guardians of his cause ;
Theirs were the prophets, theirs the priestly call,
And theirs by birth the Saviour of us all.

200

In vain the nations, that had seen them rise
With fierce and envious yet admiring eyes,
Had sought to crush them, guarded as they were
By power divine, and skill that could not err.

Had they maintained allegiance firm and sure,
And kept the faith immaculate and pure,
Then the proud eagles of all-conquering Rome
Had found one city not to be o'ercome,
And the twelve standards of the tribes unfurled
Had bid defiance to the warring world.

210

But grace abused brings forth the foulest deeds,
As richest soil the most luxuriant weeds.

Cured of the golden calves, their fathers' sin,
They set up self, that idol-god within ;

Viewed a Deliverer with disdain and hate

Who left them still a tributary state ;

Seized fast his hand, held out to set them free

From a worse yoke, and nailed it to the tree.

220

There was the consummation and the crown,

The flower of Israel's infamy full blown ;

Thence date their sad declension and their fall,

Their woes not yet repealed ; thence date them all.

Thus fell the best instructed in her day,
And the most favoured land, look where we may.

Philosophy indeed on Grecian eyes

Had poured the day, and cleared the Roman skies ;

In other climes perhaps creative art,

With power surpassing theirs, performed her part,

230

Might give more life to marble, or might fill

The glowing tablets with a juster skill,

Might shine in fable, and grace idle themes

With all the embroidery of poetic dreams ;

'Twas theirs alone to dive into the plan

That truth and mercy had revealed to man ;

And while the world beside, that plan unknown,

Deified useless wood, or senseless stone,

They breathed in faith their well-directed prayers,

And the true God, the God of truth, was theirs.

240

Their glory faded, and their race dispersed,
The last of nations now, though once the first ;

They warn and teach the proudest, would they learn,
 "Keep wisdom, or meet vengeance in your turn :
 If we escaped not, if Heaven spared not us,
 Peeled, scattered, and exterminated thus ;
 If vice received her retribution due,
 When we were visited, what hope for you ?
 When God arises with an awful frown
 To punish lust, or pluck presumption down ;
 When gifts perverted, or not duly prized,
 Pleasure o'ervalued, and his grace despised,
 Provoke the vengeance of his righteous hand
 To pour down wrath upon a thankless land ;
 He will be found impartially severe,
 Too just to wink, or speak the guilty clear."

250

O Israel, of all nations most undone !
 Thy diadem displaced, thy sceptre gone ;
 Thy temple, once thy glory, fallen and rased,
 And thou a worshipper e'en where thou mayst ;
 Thy services, once holy without spot,
 Mere shadows now, their ancient pomp forgot :
 Thy Levites, once a consecrated host,
 No longer Levites, and their lineage lost ;
 And thou thyself o'er every country sown,
 With none on earth that thou canst call thine own ;
 Cry aloud, thou that sittest in the dust,
 Cry to the proud, the cruel, and unjust ;
 Knock at the gates of nations, rouse their fears ;
 Say wrath is coming, and the storm appears ;
 But raise the shrillest cry in British ears.

260

270

What ails thee, restless as the waves that roar
 And fling their foam against thy chalky shore ?
 Mistress, at least while Providence shall please,
 And trident-bearing queen of the wide seas,
 Why, having kept good faith, and often shown
 Friendship and truth to others, findest thou none ?
 Thou that hast set the persecuted free,
 None interposes now to succour thee ;
 Countries indebted to thy power, that shine
 With light derived from thee, would smother thine ;
 Thy very children watch for thy disgrace—
 A lawless brood,—and curse thee to thy face.
 Thy rulers load thy credit, year by year,
 With sums Peruvian mines could never clear ;
 As if, like arches built with skilful hand,
 The more 'twere pressed the firmer it would stand.
 The cry in all thy ships is still the same,
 "Speed us away to battle and to fame."

280

Thy mariners explore the wild expanse,
Impatient to descry the flags of France ;
But, though they fight as thine have ever fought,
Return ashamed without the wreaths they sought.
Thy senate is a scene of civil jar,
Chaos of contrarieties at war ;
Where sharp and solid, phlegmatic and light,
Discordant atoms meet, ferment, and fight ;
Where obstinacy takes his sturdy stand,
To disconcert what policy has planned ;
Where policy is busied all night long
In setting right what Faction has set wrong ;
Where flails of oratory thresh the floor,
That yields them chaff and dust, and nothing more.
Thy racked inhabitants repine, complain,
Taxed till the brow of labour sweats in vain ;
War lays a burden on the reeling state,
And peace does nothing to relieve the weight ;
Successive loads succeeding broils impose,
And sighing millions prophesy the close.

290

300

Is adverse Providence, when pondered well,
So dimly writ, or difficult to spell,
Thou canst not read with readiness and ease
Providence adverse in events like these ?
Know, then, that heavenly wisdom on this ball
Creates, gives birth to, guides, consummates all ;
That, while laborious and quick-thoughted man
Snuffs up the praise of what he seems to plan,
He first conceives, then perfects his design,
As a mere instrument in hands divine :
Blind to the working of that secret power,
That balances the wings of every hour,
The busy trifler dreams himself alone,
Frames many a purpose, and God works his own.
States thrive or wither as moons wax and wane,
E'en as his will and his decrees ordain ;
While honour, virtue, piety bear sway,
They flourish ; and as these decline, decay :
In just resentment of his injured laws,
He pours contempt on them and on their cause ;
Strikes the rough thread of error right athwart
The web of every scheme they have at heart ;
Bid rottenness invade and bring to dust
The pillars of support in which they trust,
And do his errand of disgrace and shame
On the chief strength and glory of the frame.
None ever yet impeded what He wrought,

310

320

330

None bars Him out from his most secret thought :
 Darkness itself before his eye is light,
 And hell's close mischief naked in his sight.

Stand now and judge thyself—Hast thou incurred 340
 His anger, who can waste thee with a word,
 Who poises and proportions sea and land,
 Weighing them in the hollow of his hand,
 And in whose awful sight all nations seem
 As grasshoppers, as dust, a drop, a dream ?
 Hast thou (a sacrilege his soul abhors)
 Claimed 'all the glory of thy prosperous wars,
 Proud of thy fleets and armies, stolen the gem
 Of his just praise, to lavish it on them ?
 Hast thou not learned, what thou art often told, 350
 A truth still sacred, and believed of old,
 That no success attends on spears and swords
 Unblessed, and that the battle is the Lord's ?
 That courage is his creature, and dismay
 The post, that at his bidding speeds away,
 Ghastly in feature, and his stammering tongue
 With doleful rumour and sad passage hung,
 To quell the valour of the stoutest heart,
 And teach the combatant a woman's part ?
 That He bids thousands fly when none pursue, 360
 Saves as He will by many or by few,
 And claims for ever, as his royal right,
 The event and sure decision of the fight ?

Hast thou, though suckled at fair freedom's breast,
 Exported slavery to the conquered East ?
 Pulled down the tyrants India served with dread,
 And raised thyself, a greater, in their stead ?
 Gone thither armed and hungry, returned full,
 Fed from the richest veins of the Mogul,
 A despot big with power obtained by wealth, 370
 And that obtained by rapine and by stealth ?
 With Asiatic vices stored thy mind,
 But left their virtues and thine own behind ;
 And, having trucked thy soul, brought home the fee,
 To tempt the poor to sell himself to thee ?

Hast thou by statute shoved from its design
 The Saviour's feast, his own blest bread and wine,
 And made the symbols of atoning grace
 An office key, a picklock to a place,
 That infidels may prove their title good 380
 By an oath dipped in sacramental blood ?
 A blot that will be still a blot, in spite
 Of all that grave apologists may write ;

And though a bishop toil to cleanse the stain,
 He wipes and scours the silver cup in vain.
 And hast thou sworn on every slight pretence,
 Till perjuries are common as bad pence,
 While thousands, careless of the damning sin,
 Kiss the book's outside, who ne'er look within ?

Hast thou, when heaven has clothed thee with disgrace,
 And, long provoked, repaid thee to thy face, 391
 (For thou hast known eclipses, and endured
 Dimness and anguish, all thy beams obscured,
 When sin has shed dishonour on thy brow ;
 And never of a sabler hue than now ;)

Hast thou with heart perverse and conscience seared,
 Despising all rebuke, still persevered,
 And having chosen evil, scorned the voice
 That cried, " Repent ! "—and gloried in thy choice ?
 Thy fastings, when calamity at last 400

Suggests the expedient of a yearly fast,
 What mean they ? Canst thou dream there is a power
 In lighter diet at a later hour,

To charm to sleep the threatenings of the skies,
 And hide past folly from all-seeing eyes ?

The fast that wins deliverance, and suspends
 The stroke that a vindictive God intends,

Is to renounce hypocrisy ; to draw
 Thy life upon the pattern of the law ;

To war with pleasures idolized before ; 410

To vanquish lust, and wear its yoke no more.

All fasting else, whate'er be the pretence,
 Is wooing mercy by renewed offence.

Hast thou within thee sin that in old time
 Brought fire from heaven, the sex-abusing crime,
 Whose horrid perpetration stamps disgrace
 Baboons are free from upon human race ?

Think on the fruitful and well-watered spot
 That fed the flocks and herds of wealthy Lot,
 Where Paradise seemed still vouchsafed on earth, 420

Burning and scorched into perpetual dearth,
 Or, in his words who damned the base desire,

Suffering the vengeance of eternal fire :

Then Nature injured, scandalized, defiled,
 Unveiled her blushing cheek, looked on, and smiled ;

Beheld with joy the lovely scene defaced
 And praised the wrath that laid her beauties waste.

Far be the thought from any verse of mine,
 And farther still the formed and fixed design,
 To thrust the charge of deeds that I detest 430

Against an innocent, unconscious breast :
 The man that dares traduce, because he can
 With safety to himself, is not a man :
 An individual is a sacred mark,
 Not to be pierced in play or in the dark ;
 But public censure speaks a public foe,
 Unless a zeal for virtue guide the blow.

The priestly brotherhood, devout, sincere,
 From mean self-interest and ambition clear,
 Their hope in heaven, servility their scorn, 440
 Prompt to persuade, expostulate, and warn,
 Their wisdom pure, and given them from above,
 Their usefulness ensured by zeal and love,
 As meek as the man Moses, and withal
 As bold as in Agrippa's presence Paul,
 Should fly the world's contaminating touch,
 Holy and unpolluted :—are thine such ?
 Except a few with Eli's spirit blest,
 Hophni and Phineas may describe the rest.

Where shall a teacher look, in days like these, 450
 For ears and hearts that he can hope to please ?
 Look to the poor—the simple and the plain
 Will hear perhaps thy salutary strain :
 Humility is gentle, apt to learn,
 Speak but the word, will listen and return.
 Alas, not so ! the poorest of the flock
 Are proud, and set their faces as a rock ;
 Denied that earthly opulence they choose,
 God's better gift they scoff at and refuse.
 The rich, the produce of a nobler stem, 460
 Are more intelligent at least,—try them.
 O vain inquiry ! they without remorse
 Are altogether gone a devious course ;
 Where beckoning pleasure leads them, wildly stray ;
 Have burst the bands, and cast the yoke away.

Now borne upon the wings of truth, sublime,
 Review thy dim original and prime.
 This island spot of unreclaimed rude earth,
 The cradle that received thee at thy birth,
 Was rocked by many a rough Norwegian blast, 470
 And Danish howlings scared thee as they passed ;
 For thou wast born amid the din of arms,
 And sucked a breast that panted with alarms.
 While yet thou wast a grovelling puling chit,
 Thy bones not fashioned, and thy joints not knit,
 The Roman taught thy stubborn knee to bow,
 Though twice a Cæsar could not bend thee now :

His victory was that of orient light,
When the sun's shafts disperse the gloom of night :
Thy language at this distant moment shows 480
How much the country to the conqueror owes :
Expressive, energetic, and refined,
It sparkles with the gems he left behind :
He brought thy land a blessing when he came,
He found thee savage, and he left thee tame ;
Taught thee to clothe thy pinked and painted hide,
And grace thy figure with a soldier's pride ;
He sowed the seeds of order where he went,
Improved thee far beyond his own intent,
And, while he ruled thee by the sword alone, 490
Made thee at last a warrior like his own.
Religion, if in heavenly truths attired,
Needs only to be seen to be admired ;
But thine, as dark as witcheries of the night,
Was formed to harden hearts and shock the sight ;
Thy Druids struck the well-strung harps they bore
With fingers deeply dyed in human gore ;
And, while the victim slowly bled to death,
Upon the tolling chords rung out his dying breath.

Who brought the lamp that with awakening beams 500
Dispelled thy gloom, and broke away thy dreams,
Tradition, now decrepit and worn out,
Babbler of ancient fables, leaves a doubt :
But still light reached thee ; and those gods of thine,
Woden and Thor, each tottering in his shrine,
Fell broken and defaced at his own door,
As Dagon in Philistia long before.
But Rome with sorceries and magic wand
Soon raised a cloud that darkened every land ;
And thine was smothered in the stench and fog 510
Of Tiber's marshes and the papal bog.
Then priests with bulls and briefs and shaven crowns,
And griping fists, and unrelenting frowns,
Legates and delegates with powers from hell,
Though heavenly in pretension, fleeced thee well ;
And to this hour, to keep it fresh in mind,
Some twigs of that old scourge are left behind.*
Thy soldiery, the Pope's well-managed pack,
Were trained beneath his lash, and knew the smack,
And, when he laid them on the scent of blood, 520
Would hunt a Saracen through fire and flood.
Lavish of life to win an empty tomb,
That proved a mint of wealth, a mine to Rome,

* Which may be found at Doctors' Commons.

They left their bones beneath unfriendly skies,
 His worthless absolution all the prize.
 Thou wast the veriest slave in days of yore
 That ever dragged a chain or tugged an oar ;
 Thy monarchs arbitrary, fierce, unjust,
 Themselves the slaves of bigotry or lust,
 Disdained thy counsels, only in distress 530
 Found thee a goodly sponge for power to press.
 Thy chiefs, the lords of many a petty fee,
 Provoked and harassed, in return plagued thee ;
 Called thee away from peaceable employ,
 Domestic happiness and rural joy,
 To waste thy life in arms, or lay it down
 In causeless feuds and bickerings of their own.
 Thy parliaments adored on bended knees
 The sovereignty they were convened to please ;
 Whate'er was asked, too timid to resist, 540
 Complied with, and were graciously dismissed ;
 And if some Spartan soul a doubt expressed,
 And, blushing at the tameness of the rest,
 Dared to suppose the subject had a choice,
 He was a traitor by the general voice.
 O slave ! with powers thou didst not dare exert,
 Verse cannot stoop so low as thy desert ;
 It shakes the sides of splenetic disdain,
 Thou self-entitled ruler of the main,
 To trace thee to the date when yon fair sea, 550
 That clips thy shores, had no such charms for thee ;
 When other nations flew from coast to coast,
 And thou hadst neither fleet nor flag to boast.
 Kneel now, and lay thy forehead in the dust ;
 Blush if thou canst,—not petrified, thou must ;
 Act but an honest and a faithful part ;
 Compare what then thou wast with what thou art ;
 And God's disposing providence confessed,
 Obduracy itself must yield the rest.—
 Then art thou bound to serve him, and to prove, 560
 Hour after hour, thy gratitude and love.
 Has He not hid thee, and thy favoured land,
 For ages safe beneath his sheltering hand,
 Given thee his blessing on the clearest proof,
 Bid nations leagued against thee stand aloof,
 And charged hostility and hate to roar
 Where else they would, but not upon thy shore ?
 His power secured thee, when presumptuous Spain
 Baptized her fleet Invincible in vain ;
 Her gloomy monarch, doubtful and resigned 570

To every pang that racks an anxious mind,
 Asked of the waves that broke upon his coast,
 "What tidings?" and the surge replied—"All lost."
 And when the Stuart leaning on the Scot,
 Then too much feared, and now too much forgot,
 Pierced to the very centre of the realm,
 And hoped to seize his abdicated helm,
 'Twas but to prove how quickly with a frown
 He that had raised thee could have plucked thee down.
 Peculiar is the grace by thee possessed, 580
 Thy foes implacable, thy land at rest;
 Thy thunders travel over earth and seas,
 And all at home is pleasure, wealth, and ease.
 'Tis thus, extending his tempestuous arm,
 Thy Maker fills the nations with alarm,
 While his own heaven surveys the troubled scene,
 And feels no change, unshaken and serene.
 Freedom, in other lands scarce known to shine,
 Pours out a flood of splendour upon thine;
 Thou hast as bright an interest in her rays, 590
 As ever Roman had in Rome's best days.
 True freedom is where no restraint is known
 That Scripture, justice, and good sense disown,
 Where only vice and injury are tied,
 And all from shore to shore is free beside.
 Such freedom is—and Windsor's hoary towers
 Stood trembling at the boldness of thy powers
 That won a nymph on that immortal plain,
 Like her the fabled Phœbus wooed in vain:
 He found the laurel only—happier you, 600
 The unfading laurel, and the virgin too! *

Now think, if pleasure have a thought to spare;
 If God himself be not beneath her care;
 If business, constant as the wheels of time,
 Can pause one hour to read a serious rhyme;
 If the new mail thy merchants now receive,
 Or expectation of the next, give leave;
 Oh think, if chargeable with deep arrears
 For such indulgence gilding all thy years,
 How much, though long neglected, shining yet, 610
 The beams of heavenly truth have swelled the debt.
 When persecuting zeal made royal sport
 With tortured innocence in Mary's court,
 And Bonner, blithe as shepherd at a wake,
 Enjoyed the show and danced about the stake;

* Alluding to the grant of Magna Charta, which was extorted from King John by the Barons at Runnymede, near Windsor.

The Sacred Book, its value understood,
 Received the seal of martyrdom in blood.
 Those holy men, so full of truth and grace,
 Seem to reflection of a different race,
 Meek, modest, venerable, wise, sincere, 620
 In such a cause they could not dare to fear ;
 They could not purchase earth with such a prize,
 Nor spare a life too short to reach the skies.
 From them to thee conveyed along the tide
 Their streaming hearts poured freely when they died,
 Those truths which neither use nor years impair
 Invite thee, woo thee, to the bliss they share.
 What dotage will not vanity maintain ?
 What web too weak to catch a modern brain ?
 The moles and bats in full assembly find, 630
 On special search, the keen-eyed eagle blind.
 And did they dream, and art thou wiser now ?
 Prove it—if better, I submit and bow.
 Wisdom and goodness are twin born, one heart
 Must hold both sisters, never seen apart.

So then—as darkness overspread the deep,
 Ere Nature rose from her eternal sleep,
 And this delightful earth, and that fair sky,
 Leaped out of nothing, called by the Most High :
 By such a change thy darkness is made light, 640
 Thy chaos order, and thy weakness might ;
 And He, whose power mere nullity obeys,
 Who found thee nothing, formed thee for his praise.
 To praise him is to serve him, and fulfil,
 Doing and suffering, his unquestioned will ;
 'Tis to believe what men inspired of old,
 Faithful, and faithfully informed, unfold :
 Candid and just, with no false aim in view,
 To take for truth what cannot but be true ;
 To learn in God's own school the Christian part, 650
 And bind the task assigned thee to thine heart :
 Happy the man there seeking and there found,
 Happy the nation where such men abound !

How shall a verse impress thee ? By what name
 Shall I adjure thee not to court thy shame ?
 By theirs, whose bright example unimpeached
 Directs thee to that eminence they reached,
 Heroes and worthies of days past, thy sires ?
 Or His, who touched their hearts with hallowed fires ?
 Their names, alas ! in vain reproach an age 660
 Whom all the vanities they scorned engage !
 And His, that seraphs tremble at, is hung

Disgracefully on every trifier's tongue,
 Or serves the champion in forensic war
 To flourish and parade with at the bar.
 Pleasure herself perhaps suggests a plea,
 If interest move thee, to persuade even thee ;
 By every charm, that smiles upon her face,
 By joys possessed, and joys still held in chase,
 If dear society be worth a thought, 670
 And if the feast of freedom cloy thee not,
 Reflect that these, and all that seems thine own,
 Held by the tenure of His will alone,
 Like angels in the service of their Lord,
 Remain with thee, or leave thee at His word ;
 That gratitude and temperance in our use
 Of what he gives, unsparing and profuse,
 Secure the favour and enhance the joy,
 That thankless waste and wild abuse destroy.

But above all reflect,—how cheap soe'er 680
 Those rights that millions envy thee appear,
 And, though resolved to risk them, and swim down
 The tide of pleasure, heedless of His frown,—
 That blessings truly sacred, and, when given,
 Marked with the signature and stamp of Heaven,
 The word of prophecy, those truths divine,
 Which make that heaven, if thou desire it, thine,
 (Awful alternative ! believed, beloved,
 Thy glory,—and thy shame if unimproved,)
 Are never long vouchsafed, if pushed aside 690
 With cold disgust or philosophic pride ;
 And that, judicially withdrawn, disgrace,
 Error, and darkness occupy their place.

A world is up in arms, and thou, a spot
 Not quickly found if negligently sought,
 Thy soul as ample as thy bounds are small,
 Endurest the brunt, and darest defy them all :
 And wilt thou join to this bold enterprise
 A bolder still, a contest with the skies ?
 Remember, if He guard thee and secure, 700
 Whoe'er assails thee, thy success is sure ;
 But if He leave thee, though the skill and power
 Of nations sworn to spoil thee and devour
 Were all collected in thy single arm,
 And thou couldst laugh away the fear of harm,
 That strength would fail, opposed against the push
 And feeble onset of a pigmy rush.

Say not (and if the thought of such defence
 Should spring within thy bosom, drive it thence,)

“What nation amongst all my foes is free
 From crimes as base as any charged on me?”
 Their measure filled, they too shall pay the debt,
 Which God, though long forboren, will not forget.
 But know that wrath divine, when most severe,
 Makes justice still the guide of his career,
 And will not punish, in one mingled crowd,
 Them without light, and thee without a cloud.

710

Muse, hang this harp upon yon aged beech,
 Still murmuring with the solemn truths I teach;
 And while at intervals a cold blast sings
 Through the dry leaves, and pants upon the strings,
 My soul shall sigh in secret, and lament
 A nation scourged, yet tardy to repent.
 I know the warning song is sung in vain,
 That few will hear and fewer heed the strain;
 But if a sweeter voice, and one designed
 A blessing to my country and mankind,
 Reclaim the wandering thousands and bring home
 A flock so scattered and so wont to roam,
 Then place it once again between my knees,
 The sound of truth will then be sure to please:
 And truth alone, where'er my life be cast,
 In scenes of plenty, or the pining waste,
 Shall be my chosen theme, my glory to the last.

720

730

HOPE

— doceas iter, et sacra ostia pandas.

VIRG. *Æn.* vi.

Ask what is human life—the sage replies,
 With disappointment lowering in his eyes,
 A painful passage o'er a restless flood,
 A vain pursuit of fugitive false good,
 A scene of fancied bliss and heartfelt care,
 Closing at last in darkness and despair.
 The poor, inured to drudgery and distress,
 Act without aim, think little, and feel less,
 And nowhere, but in feigned Arcadian scenes,
 Taste happiness, or know what pleasure means.
 Riches are passed away from hand to hand,
 As fortune, vice, or folly may command;
 As in a dance the pair that take the lead
 Turn downward, and the lowest pair succeed,
 So shifting and so various is the plan

10

By which Heaven rules the mixt affairs of man.
Vicissitude wheels round the motley crowd,
The rich grow poor, the poor become purse-proud ;
Business is labour, and man's weakness such,
Pleasure is labour too, and tires as much ; 20
The very sense of it foregoes its use,
By repetition palled, by age obtuse.
Youth lost in dissipation, we deplore,
Through life's sad remnant, what no sighs restore ;
Our years, a fruitless race without a prize,
Too many, yet too few to make us wise.

Dangling his cane about and taking snuff,
Lothario cries, " What philosophic stuff !
O querulous and weak ! whose useless brain
Once thought of nothing, and now thinks in vain : 30
Whose eye reverted weeps o'er all the past,
Whose prospect shows thee a disheartening waste ;
Would age in thee resign his wintry reign,
And youth invigorate that frame again,
Renewed desire would grace with other speech
Joys always prized when placed within our reach.
For lift thy palsied head, shake off the gloom
That overhangs the borders of thy tomb,
See Nature gay as when she first began,
With smiles alluring her admirer man ; 40
She spreads the morning over eastern hills,
Earth glitters with the drops the night distils ;
The sun obedient at her call appears
To fling his glories o'er the robe she wears ;
Banks clothed with flowers, groves filled with sprightly sounds,
The yellow tilth, green meads, rocks, rising grounds,
Streams edged with osiers, fattening every field
Where'er they flow, now seen and now concealed ;
From the blue rim where skies and mountains meet
Down to the very turf beneath thy feet, 50
Ten thousand charms that only fools despise,
Or pride can look at with indifferent eyes,
All speak one language, all with one sweet voice
Cry to her universal realm, Rejoice !
Man feels the spur of passions and desires,
And she gives largely more than he requires ;
Not that, his hours devoted all to care,
Hollow-eyed abstinence, and lean despair,
The wretch may pine, while to his smell, taste, sight,
She holds a paradise of rich delight ; 60
But gently to rebuke his awkward fear,
To prove that what she gives she gives sincere,

To banish hesitation, and proclaim
 His happiness her dear, her only aim.
 'Tis grave philosophy's absurdest dream,
 That heaven's intentions are not what they seem,
 That only shadows are dispensed below,
 And earth has no reality but woe."

Thus things terrestrial wear a different hue,
 As youth or age persuades ; and neither true. 70
 So Flora's wreath through coloured crystal seen,
 The rose or lily appears blue or green,
 But still the imputed tints are those alone
 The medium represents, and not their own.

To rise at noon, sit slipshod and undressed,
 To read the news, or fiddle, as seems best,
 Till half the world comes rattling at his door,
 To fill the dull vacuity till four ;
 And, just when evening turns the blue vault grey,
 To spend two hours in dressing for the day ; 80
 To make the sun a bauble without use,
 Save for the fruits his heavenly beams produce ;
 Quite to forget, or deem it worth no thought
 Who bids him shine, or if he shine or not ;
 Through mere necessity to close his eyes
 Just when the larks and when the shepherds rise ;
 Is such a life, so tediously the same,
 So void of all utility or aim,
 That poor Jonquil, ~~with almost every breath,~~
 Sighs for his exit, vulgarly called death ; 90
 For he, with all his follies, has a mind
 Not yet so blank, or fashionably blind,
 But now and then perhaps a feeble ray
 Of distant wisdom shoots across his way,
 By which he reads, that life without a plan,
 As useless as the moment it began,
 Serves merely as a soil for discontent
 To thrive in ; an incumbrance ere half spent.
 Oh weariness beyond what asses feel,
 That tread the circuit of the cistern wheel ! 100
 A dull rotation, never at a stay,
 Yesterday's face twin image of to-day,
 While conversation, an exhausted stock,
 Grows drowsy as the clicking of a clock.
 "No need," he cries, "of gravity stuffed out
 With academic dignity devout,
 To read wise lectures, vanity the text :
 Proclaim the remedy, ye learned, next ;
 For truth self-evident, with pomp impressed,

Is vanity surpassing all the rest."

110

That remedy, not hid in deeps profound,
 Yet seldom sought where only to be found,
 While passion turns aside from its due scope
 The inquirer's aim, that remedy is Hope.
 Life is His gift from whom whate'er life needs
 And every good and perfect gift proceeds ;
 Bestowed on man, like all that we partake,
 Royally, freely, for his bounty's sake ;
 Transient indeed, as is the fleeting hour,
 And yet the seed of an immortal flower
 Designed, in honour of his endless love,
 To fill with fragrance his abode above ;
 No trifle, howsoever short it seem,
 And, howsoever shadowy, no dream ;
 Its value, what no thought can ascertain,
 Nor all an angel's eloquence explain.

120

Men deal with life as children with their play,
 Who first misuse, then cast their toys away ;
 Live to no sober purpose, and contend
 That their Creator had no serious end.
 When God and man stand opposite in view,
 Man's disappointment must of course ensue.
 The just Creator condescends to write,
 In beams of inextinguishable light,
 His names of wisdom, goodness, power, and love,
 On all that blooms below, or shines above,
 To catch the wandering notice of mankind,
 And teach the world, if not perversely blind,
 His gracious attributes, and prove the share
 His offspring hold in his paternal care.
 If, led from earthly things to things divine,
 His creature thwart not his august design,
 Then praise is heard instead of reasoning pride,
 And captious cavil and complaint subside.
 Nature, employed in her allotted place,
 Is handmaid to the purposes of Grace ;
 By good vouchsafed makes known superior good,
 And bliss not seen by blessings understood :
 That bliss, revealed in Scripture with a glow
 Bright as the covenant-ensuring bow,
 Fires all his feelings with a noble scorn
 Of sensual evil ; and thus Hope is born.

130

140

150

Hope sets the stamp of vanity on all
 That men have deemed substantial since the Fall,
 Yet has the wondrous virtue to educe
 From emptiness itself a real use ;

And while she takes, as at a father's hand,
 What health and sober appetite demand,
 From fading good derives with chymic art
 That lasting happiness, a thankful heart. 160
 Hope, with uplifted foot set free from earth,
 Pants for the place of her ethereal birth,
 On steady wing sails through the immense abyss,
 Plucks amaranthine joys from bowers of bliss,
 And crowns the soul, while yet a mourner here,
 With wreaths like those triumphant spirits wear.
 Hope, as an anchor firm and sure, holds fast
 The Christian vessel, and defies the blast.
 Hope! nothing else can nourish and secure
 His newborn virtues, and preserve him pure. 170
 Hope! let the wretch once conscious of the joy,
 Whom now despairing agonies destroy,
 Speak, for he can, and none so well as he,
 What treasures centre, what delights, in thee.
 Had he the gems, the spices, and the land
 That boasts the treasure, all at his command,
 The fragrant grove, the inestimable mine,
 Were light, when weighed against one smile of thine.

Though, clasped and cradled in his nurse's arms,
 He shine with all a cherub's artless charms, 180
 Man is the genuine offspring of revolt,
 Stubborn and sturdy, a wild ass's colt;
 His passions, like the watery stores that sleep
 Beneath the smiling surface of the deep,
 Wait but the lashes of a wintry storm
 To frown and roar, and shake his feeble form.
 From infancy through childhood's giddy maze,
 Froward at school, and fretful in his plays,
 The puny tyrant burns to subjugate
 The free republic of the whip-gig state. 190
 If one, his equal in athletic frame,
 Or, more provoking still, of nobler name,
 Dares step across his arbitrary views,
 An Iliad, only not in verse, ensues;
 The little Greeks look trembling at the scales,
 Till the best tongue or heaviest hand prevails.

Now see him launched into the world at large :
 • If priest, supinely droning o'er his charge,
 Their fleece his pillow, and his weekly drawl,
 Though short, too long, the price he pays for all; 200
 If lawyer, loud whatever cause he plead,
 But proudest of the worst, if that succeed;
 Perhaps a grave physician, gathering fees,

Punctually paid for lengthening out disease ;
 No COTTON whose humanity sheds rays
 That make superior skill his second praise ;
 If arms engage him, he devotes to sport
 His date of life, so likely to be short ;
 A soldier may be anything, if brave ;
 So may a tradesman, if not quite a knave. 210
 Such stuff the world is made of ; and mankind
 To passion, interest, pleasure, whim, resigned,
 Insist on, as if each were his own Pope,
 Forgiveness, and the privilege of hope ;
 But conscience, in some awful silent hour,
 When captivating lusts have lost their power,
 Perhaps when sickness, or some fearful dream,
 Reminds him of religion, hated theme !
 Starts from the down, on which she lately slept,
 And tells of laws despised, at least not kept : 220
 Shows with a pointing finger, and no noise,
 A pale procession of past sinful joys,
 All witnesses of blessings foully scorned
 And life abused, and not to be suborned.
 " Mark these," she says ; " these, summoned from afar,
 Begin their march to meet thee at the bar ;
 There find a Judge inexorably just,
 And perish there, as all presumption must."
 Peace be to those (such peace as earth can give)
 Who live in pleasure, dead even while they live ; 230
 Born capable indeed of heavenly truth ;
 But down to latest age, from earliest youth,
 Their mind a wilderness through want of care,
 The plough of wisdom never entering there.
 Peace (if insensibility may claim
 A right to the meek honours of her name)
 To men of pedigree, their noble race
 Emulous always of the nearest place
 To any throne, except the throne of grace.
 Let cottagers and unenlightened swains 240
 Revere the laws they dream that heaven ordains ;
 Resort on Sundays to the house of prayer,
 And ask, and fancy they find, blessings there ;
 Themselves, perhaps, when weary they retreat
 To enjoy cool nature in a country seat,
 To exchange the centre of a thousand trades
 For clumps, and lawns, and temples, and cascades,
 May now and then their velvet cushions take,
 And seem to pray, for good example's sake ;
 Judging, in charity no doubt, the town 250

Pious enough, and having need of none.
 Kind souls ! to teach their tenantry to prize
 What they themselves, without remorse, despise :
 Nor hope have they, nor fear, of aught to come,
 As well for them had prophecy been dumb ;
 They could have held the conduct they pursue,
 Had Paul of Tarsus lived and died a Jew ;
 And truth, proposed to reasoners wise as they,
 Is a pearl cast, completely cast, away.

They die.—Death lends them, pleased, and as in sport, 260
 All the grim honours of his ghastly court.
 Far other paintings grace the chamber now,
 Where late we saw the mimic landscape glow :
 The busy heralds hang the sable scene
 With mournful scutcheons, and dim lamps between,
 Proclaim their titles to the crowd around,
 But they that wore them move not at the sound ;
 The coronet placed idly at their head
 Adds nothing now to the degraded dead ;
 And even the star that glitters on the bier 270
 Can only say—" Nobility lies here."
 Peace to all such—'twere pity to offend,
 By useless censure, whom we cannot mend ;
 Life without hope can close but in despair ;
 'Twas there we found them, and must leave them there.

As when two pilgrims in a forest stray,
 Both may be lost, yet each in his own way ;
 So fares it with the multitudes beguiled
 In vain opinion's waste and dangerous wild ;
 Ten thousand rove the brakes and thorns among, 280
 Some eastward, and some westward, and all wrong.
 But here, alas ! the fatal difference lies,
 Each man's belief is right in his own eyes ;
 And he that blames what they have blindly chose,
 Incurs resentment for the love he shows.

Say, botanist, within whose province fall
 The cedar and the hyssop on the wall,
 Of all that decks the lanes, the fields, the bowers,
 What parts the kindred tribes of weeds and flowers ?
 Sweet scent, or lovely form, or both combined, 290
 Distinguish every cultivated kind ;
 The want of both denotes a meaner breed,
 And Chloe from her garland picks the weed.
 Thus hopes of every sort, whatever sect
 Esteem them, sow them, rear them, and protect,
 If wild in nature, and not duly found,
 Gethsemane ! in thy dear hallowed ground,

That cannot bear the blaze of Scripture light,
Nor cheer the spirit, nor refresh the sight,
Nor animate the soul to Christian deeds,— 300
(Oh cast them from thee !) are weeds, arrant weeds.

Etheldred's house, the centre of six ways,
Diverging each from each, like equal rays,
Himself as bountiful as April rains,
Lord paramount of the surrounding plains,
Would give relief of bed and board to none
But guests that sought it in the appointed ONE :
And they might enter at his open door,
Even till his spacious hall would hold no more.
He sent a servant forth by every road, 310
To sound his horn, and publish it abroad,
That all might mark—knight, menial, high, and low—
An ordinance it concerned them much to know.
If after all some headstrong hardy lout
Would disobey, though sure to be shut out,
Could he with reason murmur at his case,
Himself sole author of his own disgrace ?
No ! the decree was just and without flaw ;
And he that made had right to make the law ;
His sovereign power and pleasure unrestrained, 320
The wrong was his who wrongfully complained.

Yet half mankind maintain a churlish strife
With Him, the Donor of eternal life,
Because the deed by which his love confirms
The largess he bestows prescribes the terms.
Compliance with his will your lot ensures ;
Accept it only, and the boon is yours.
And sure it is as kind to smile and give,
As with a frown to say, " Do this, and live."
Love is not pedler's trumpery, bought and sold : 330
He *will* give freely, or he *will* withhold ;
His soul abhors a mercenary thought,
And him as deeply who abhors it not :
He stipulates indeed, but merely this,
That man will freely take an unbought bliss,
Will trust him for a faithful generous part,
Nor set a price upon a willing heart.
Of all the ways that seem to promise fair,
To place you where his saints his presence share,
This only can ; for this plain cause, expressed 340
In terms as plain, Himself has shut the rest.
But oh the strife, the bickering, and debate,
The tidings of unpurchased heaven create !
The flirtd fan, the bridle, and the toss,

All speakers, yet all language at a loss.
 From stuccoed walls smart arguments rebound ;
 And beaux, adepts in every thing profound,
 Die of disdain, or whistle off the sound.
 Such is the clamour of rooks, daws, and kites,
 The explosion of the levelled tube excites,
 Where mouldering abbey walls o'erhang the glade,
 And oaks coeval spread a mournful shade ;
 The screaming nations, hovering in mid air,
 Loudly resent the stranger's freedom there,
 And seem to warn him never to repeat
 His bold intrusion on their dark retreat.

350

"Adieu," Vinoso cries, ere yet he sips,
 The purple bumper trembling at his lips,
 "Adieu to all morality, if Grace
 Make works a vain ingredient in the case.
 The Christian hope is—Waiter, draw the cork—
 If I mistake not—Blockhead ! with a fork !
 Without good works, whatever some may boast,
 Mere folly and delusion—Sir, your toast.
 My firm persuasion is, at least sometimes,
 That Heaven will weigh man's virtues and his crimes
 With nice attention in a righteous scale,
 And save or damn as these or those prevail.
 I plant my foot upon this ground of trust,
 And silence every fear with—God is just.
 But if perchance on some dull drizzling day
 A thought intrude that says, or seems to say,
 If thus the important cause is to be tried,
 Suppose the beam should dip on the wrong side ;
 I soon recover from these needless frights,
 And—God is merciful—sets all to rights.
 Thus between justice, as my prime support,
 And mercy, fled to as the last resort,
 I glide and steal along with heaven in view,
 And,—pardon me, the bottle stands with you."

360

370

380

"I never will believe," the colonel cries,
 "The sanguinary schemes that some devise,
 Who make the good Creator on their plan
 A being of less equity than man.
 If appetite, or what divines call lust,
 Which men comply with even because they must,
 Be punished with perdition, who is pure ?
 Then theirs, no doubt, as well as mine is sure.
 If sentence of eternal pain belong
 To every sudden slip and transient wrong,
 Then Heaven enjoins the fallible and frail

390

A hopeless task, and damns them if they fail.
 My creed (whatever some creed-makers mean
 By Athanasian nonsense, or Nicene),
 My creed is, he is safe that does his best,
 And death's a doom sufficient for the rest."

"Right," says an ensign, "and for aught I see,
 Your faith and mine substantially agree;
 The best of every man's performance here
 Is to discharge the duties of his sphere. 400

A lawyer's dealing should be just and fair,
 Honesty shines with great advantage there.
 Fasting and prayer sit well upon a priest,
 A decent caution and reserve at least.
 A soldier's best is courage in the field,
 With nothing here that wants to be concealed,
 Manly deportment, gallant, easy, gay;
 A hand as liberal as the light of day;
 The soldier thus endowed, who never shrinks
 Nor closets up his thought, whate'er he thinks, 410
 Who scorns to do an injury by stealth,
 Must go to heaven—and I must drink his health.

Sir Smug," he cries (for lowest at the board,
 Just made fifth chaplain of his patron lord,
 His shoulders witnessing by many a shrug
 How much his feelings suffered, sat Sir Smug),
 "Your office is to winnow false from true;
 Come, prophet, drink, and tell us, what think you?"

Sighing and smiling as he takes his glass,
 Which they that woo preferment rarely pass, 420
 "Fallible man," the church-bred youth replies,
 "Is still found fallible, however wise;
 And differing judgments serve but to declare,
 That truth lies somewhere, if we knew but where.

Of all it ever was my lot to read
 Of critics now alive, or long since dead,
 The book of all the world that charmed me most
 Was—well-a-day, the title-page was lost;
 The writer well remarks, a heart that knows
 To take with gratitude what Heaven bestows, 430
 With prudence always ready at our call,
 To guide our use of it, is all in all.

Doubtless it is. To which, of my own store,
 I superadd a few essentials more;
 But these, excuse the liberty I take,
 I waive just now, for conversation's sake."—
 "Spoke like an oracle!" they all exclaim,
 And add Right Reverend to Smug's honoured name.

And yet our lot is given us in a land
 Where busy arts are never at a stand, 440
 Where science points her telescopic eye,
 Familiar with the wonders of the sky,
 Where bold inquiry, diving out of sight,
 Brings many a precious pearl of truth to light,
 Where nought eludes the persevering quest,
 That fashion, taste, or luxury suggest.

But above all, in her own light arrayed,
 See Mercy's grand apocalypse displayed !
 The Sacred Book no longer suffers wrong,
 Bound in the fetters of an unknown tongue ; 450
 But speaks, with plainness art could never mend,
 What simplest minds can soonest comprehend.
 God gives the word, the preachers throng around,
 Live from his lips, and spread the glorious sound :
 That sound bespeaks Salvation on her way,
 The trumpet of a life-restoring day ;
 'Tis heard where England's Eastern glory shines,
 And in the gulfs of her Cornubian mines.
 And still it spreads. See Germany send forth
 Her * sons to pour it on the farthest north : 460
 Fired with a zeal peculiar, they defy
 The rage and rigour of a polar sky,
 And plant successfully sweet Sharon's rose
 On icy plains, and in eternal snows.

O blest within the inclosure of your rocks,
 Nor herds have ye to boast, nor bleating flocks,
 No fertilizing streams your fields divide,
 That show reversed the villas on their side ;
 No groves have ye ; no cheerful sound of bird, 470
 Or voice of turtle, in your land is heard ;
 Nor grateful eglantine regales the smell
 Of those that walk at evening where ye dwell :
 But winter, armed with terrors here unknown,
 Sits absolute on his unshaken throne ;
 Piles up his stores amidst the frozen waste,
 And bids the mountains he has built stand fast ;
 Beckons the legions of his storms away
 From happier scenes, to make your land a prey ;
 Proclaims the soil a conquest he has won,
 And scorns to share it with the distant sun. 480
 —Yet truth is yours, remote, unenvied isle !
 And peace, the genuine offspring of her smile ;
 The pride of lettered ignorance, that binds
 In chains of error our accomplished minds,

* The Moravian missionaries in Greenland.—*Vide* Krantz.

That decks with all the splendour of the true
 A false religion, is unknown to you.
 Nature indeed vouchsafes for our delight
 The sweet vicissitudes of day and night ;
 Soft airs and genial moisture feed and cheer
 Field, fruit, and flower, and every creature here ; 490
 But brighter beams than his who fires the skies
 Have risen at length on your admiring eyes,
 That shoot into your darkest caves the day,
 From which our nicer optics turn away.

Here see the encouragement grace gives to vice,
 The dire effect of mercy without price !
 What were they ? What some fools are made by art
 They were by nature, atheists, head and heart.
 The gross idolatry blind heathens teach
 Was too refined for them, beyond their reach. 500
 Not even the glorious sun, though men revere
 The monarch most that seldom will appear,
 And though his beams, that quicken where they shine,
 May claim some right to be esteemed divine,
 Not even the sun, desirable as rare,
 Could bend one knee, engage one votary there ;
 They were, what base credulity believes
 True Christians are, dissemblers, drunkards, thieves.
 The full-gorged savage, at his nauseous feast
 Spent half the darkness, and snored out the rest, 510
 Was one whom justice, on an equal plan
 Denouncing death upon the sins of man,
 Might almost have indulged with an escape,
 Chargeable only with a human shape.

What are they now ? Morality may spare
 Her grave concern, her kind suspicions there :
 The wretch who once sang wildly, danced, and laughed,
 And sucked in dizzy madness with his draught,
 Has wept a silent flood, reversed his ways,
 Is sober, meek, benevolent, and prays, 520
 Feeds sparingly, communicates his store,
 Abhors the craft he boasted of before,
 And he that stole has learned to steal no more.
 Well spake the prophet, " Let the desert sing :
 Where sprang the thorn, the spiry fir shall spring ;
 And where unsightly and rank thistles grew,
 Shall grow the myrtle and luxuriant yew."

Go now, and with important tone demand
 On what foundation virtue is to stand,
 If self-exalting claims be turned adrift, 530
 And grace be grace indeed, and life a gift ;

The poor reclaimed inhabitant, his eyes
 Glistening at once with pity and surprise,
 Amazed that shadows should obscure the sight
 Of one whose birth was in a land of light,
 Shall answer, "Hope, sweet Hope, has set me free,
 And made all pleasures else mere dross to me."

These, amidst scenes as waste as if denied
 The common care that waits on all beside,
 Wild as if Nature there, void of all good, 540
 Played only gambols in a frantic mood,
 (Yet charge not heavenly skill with having planned
 A plaything world, unworthy of his hand ;)
 Can see his love, though secret evil lurks
 In all we touch, stamped plainly on his works ;
 Deem life a blessing with its numerous woes,
 Nor spurn away a gift a God bestows.

Hard task indeed o'er Arctic seas to roam !
 Is hope exotic ? grows it not at home ?
 Yes ; but an object, bright as orient morn, 550
 May press the eye too closely to be borne :
 A distant virtue we can all confess ;
 It hurts our pride, and moves our envy, less.

Leuconomus (beneath well-sounding Greek
 I slur a name a poet must not speak)
 Stood pilloried on infamy's high stage,
 And bore the pelting scorn of half an age !
 The very butt of slander, and the blot
 For every dart that malice ever shot.
 The man that mentioned *him* at once dismissed 560
 All mercy from his lips, and sneered, and hissed ;
 His crimes were such as Sodom never knew,
 And perjury stood up to swear all true ;
 His aim was mischief and his zeal pretence,
 His speech rebellion against common sense ;
 A knave, when tried on honesty's plain rule,
 And when by that of reason, a mere fool ;
 The world's best comfort was, his doom was passed,
 Die when he might, he must be damned at last.

Now, truth, perform thine office ; waft aside 570
 The curtain drawn by prejudice and pride ;
 Reveal (the man is dead) to wondering eyes
 This more than monster in his proper guise.

He loved the world that hated him : the tear
 That dropped upon his Bible was sincere :
 Assailed by scandal and the tongue of strife,
 His only answer was a blameless life ;
 And he that forged, and he that threw, the dart,

Had each a brother's interest in his heart.
 Paul's love of Christ and steadiness unbribed 580
 Were copied close in him, and well transcribed.
 He followed Paul ; his zeal a kindred flame,
 His apostolic charity the same.

Like him, crossed cheerfully tempestuous seas,
 Forsaking country, kindred, friends, and ease ;
 Like him he laboured, and like him, content
 To bear it, suffered shame where'er he went.
 Blush, calumny ; and write upon his tomb,
 If honest eulogy can spare thee room,
 Thy deep repentance of thy thousand lies 590
 Which, aimed at him, have pierced the offended skies,
 And say, " Blot out my sin, confessed, deplored,
 Against thine image in thy saint, O Lord ! "

No blinder bigot, I maintain it still,
 Than he who must have pleasure, come what will :
 He laughs, whatever weapon truth may draw,
 And deems her sharp artillery mere straw.
 Scripture indeed is plain ; but God and he
 On Scripture ground are sure to disagree ;
 Some wiser rule must teach him how to live 600
 Than that his Maker has seen fit to give ;
 Supple and flexible as Indian cane
 To take the bend his appetites ordain ;
 Contrived to suit frail nature's crazy case,
 And reconcile his lusts with saving grace.
 By this, with nice precision of design,
 He draws upon life's map a zigzag line,
 That shows how far 'tis safe to follow sin,
 And where his danger and God's wrath begin.
 By this he forms, as pleased he sports along, 610
 His well-poised estimate of right and wrong ;
 And finds the modish manners of the day,
 Though loose, as harmless as an infant's play.

Build by whatever plan caprice decrees,
 With what materials, on what ground you please ;
 Your hope shall stand unblamed, perhaps admired,
 If not that hope the Scripture has required.
 The strange conceits, vain projects, and wild dreams,
 With which hypocrisy for ever teems,
 (Though other follies strike the public eye, 620
 And raise a laugh) pass unmolested by ;
 But if, unblameable in word and thought,
 A *man* arise, a man whom God has taught,
 With all Elijah's dignity of tone,
 And all the love of the beloved John,

To storm the citadels they build in air,
 And smite the untempered wall 'tis death to spare ;
 To sweep away all refuges of lies,
 And place, instead of quirks themselves devise,
 LAMA SABACHTHANI before their eyes ;
 To prove, that without Christ all gain is loss,
 All hope despair that stands not on his cross ;
 Except the few his God may have impressed,
 A tenfold frenzy seizes all the rest.

630

Throughout mankind, the Christian kind at least,
 There dwells a consciousness in every breast,
 That folly ends where genuine hope begins,
 And he that finds his heaven must lose his sins.

Nature opposes with her utmost force
 This riving stroke, this ultimate divorce ;
 And, while religion seems to be her view,
 Hates with a deep sincerity *the true* :

640

For this, of all that ever influenced man,
 Since Abel worshipped, or the world began,
 This only spares no lust, admits no plea,
 But makes him, if at all, completely free ;
 Sounds forth the signal, as she mounts her car,
 Of an eternal, universal war ;

Rejects all treaty, penetrates all wiles,
 Scorns with the same indifference frowns and smiles ;
 Drives through the realms of sin where riot reels,
 And grinds his crown beneath her burning wheels !

650

Hence all that is in man, pride, passion, art,
 Powers of the mind, and feelings of the heart,
 Insensible of truth's almighty charms,
 Starts at her first approach, and sounds to arms !
 While bigotry, with well-dissembled fears,
 His eyes shut fast, his fingers in his ears,
 Mighty to parry and push by God's word
 With senseless noise, his argument the sword,
 Pretends a zeal for godliness and grace,
 And spits abhorrence in the Christian's face.

660

Parent of hope, immortal Truth ! make known
 Thy deathless wreaths and triumphs all thine own :
 The silent progress of thy power is such,
 Thy means so feeble, and despised so much,
 That few believe the wonders thou hast wrought,
 And none can teach them, but whom thou hast taught.
 O see me sworn to serve thee, and command
 A painter's skill into a poet's hand,
 That, while I trembling trace a work divine,
 Fancy may stand aloof from the design,

670

And light, and shade, and every stroke be thine.

If ever thou hast felt another's pain,
 If ever when he sighed hast sighed again,
 If ever on thine eyelid stood the tear
 That pity had engendered, drop one here.
 This man was happy, had the world's good word,
 And with it every joy it can afford ;
 Friendship and love seemed tenderly at strife, 680
 Which most should sweeten his untroubled life ;
 Politely learn'd, and of a gentle race,
 Good breeding and good sense gave all a grace,
 And, whether at the toilet of the fair
 He laughed and trifled, made him welcome there,
 Or if in masculine debate he shared,
 Ensured him mute attention and regard.

Alas, how changed ! expressive of his mind,
 His eyes are sunk, arms folded, head reclined ;
 Those awful syllables, Hell, Death, and Sin, 690
 Though whispered, plainly tell what works within,
 That conscience there performs her proper part,
 And writes a doomsday sentence on his heart ;
 Forsaking and forsaken of his friends,
 He now perceives where earthly pleasure ends ;
 Hard task ! for one who lately knew no care,
 And harder still as learnt beneath despair ;
 His hours no longer pass unmarked away,
 A dark importance saddens every day ;
 He hears the notice of the clock perplexed, 700
 And cries, " Perhaps eternity strikes next ; "
 Sweet music is no longer music here,
 And laughter sounds like madness in his ear :
 His grief the world of all her power disarms,
 Wine has no taste, and beauty has no charms :
 God's holy word, once trivial in his view,
 Now by the voice of his experience true,
 Seems, as it is, the fountain whence alone
 Must spring that hope he pants to make his own.

Now let the bright reverse be known abroad ; 710
 Say man's a worm, and power belongs to God.
 As when a felon, whom his country's laws
 Have justly doomed for some atrocious cause,
 Expects in darkness and heart-chilling fears,
 The shameful close of all his misspent years ;
 If chance, on heavy pinions slowly borne,
 A tempest usher in the dreaded morn,
 Upon his dungeon walls the lightnings play,
 The thunder seems to summon him away ;

The warder at the door his key applies, 720
 Shoots back the bolt, and all his courage dies ;
 If then, just then, all thoughts of mercy lost,
 When hope, long lingering, at last yields the ghost,
 The sound of pardon pierce his startled ear,
 He drops at once his fetters and his fear ;
 A transport glows in all he looks and speaks,
 And the first thankful tears bedew his cheeks.
 Joy, far superior joy, that much outweighs
 The comfort of a few poor added days,
 Invades, possesses, and o'erwhelms the soul 730
 Of him whom hope has with a touch made whole.
 'Tis heaven, all heaven descending on the wings
 Of the glad legions of the King of kings ;
 'Tis more—'tis God diffused through every part,
 'Tis God himself triumphant in his heart.
 O, welcome now the sun's once hated light,
 His noonday beams were never half so bright.
 Not kindred minds alone are called to employ
 Their hours, their days, in listening to his joy ;
 Unconscious nature, all that he surveys, 740
 Rocks, groves, and streams, must join him in his praise.

These are thy glorious works, eternal Truth,
 The scoff of withered age and beardless youth ;
 These move the censure and illiberal grin
 Of fools that hate thee and delight in sin :
 But these shall last when night has quenched the pole,
 And heaven is all departed as a scroll.
 And when, as justice has long since decreed,
 This earth shall blaze, and a new world succeed,
 Then these thy glorious works, and they that share 750
 That Hope which can alone exclude despair,
 Shall live exempt from weakness and decay,
 The brightest wonders of an endless day.

Happy the bard (if that fair name belong
 To him that blends no fable with his song)
 Whose lines uniting, by an honest art,
 The faithful monitor's and poet's part,
 Seek to delight, that they may mend, mankind,
 And, while they captivate, inform the mind ;
 Still happier if he till a thankful soil 760
 And fruit reward his honourable toil :
 But happier far who comfort those that wait
 To hear plain truth at Judah's hallowed gate :
 Their language simple, as their manners meek,
 No shining ornaments have they to seek ;
 Nor labour they, nor time nor talents waste,

In sorting flowers to suit a fickle taste ;
 But while they speak the wisdom of the skies,
 Which art can only darken and disguise,
 The abundant harvest, recompense divine, 770
 Repays their work—the gleanings only, mine.

CHARITY

Quo nihil majus meliusve terris
 Fata donavere, bonique divi ;
 Nec dabunt, quamvis redeant in aurum
 Tempora priscum.—HOR. lib. iv. ode 2.

FAIREST and foremost of the train that wait
 On man's most dignified and happiest state,
 Whether we name thee Charity or Love,
 Chief grace below, and all in all above,
 Prosper (I press thee with a powerful plea)
 A task I venture on, impelled by thee :
 Oh never seen but in thy blest effects,
 Nor felt but in the soul that Heaven selects ;
 Who seeks to praise thee, and to make thee known 10
 To other hearts, must have thee in his own.
 Come, prompt me with benevolent desires,
 Teach me to kindle at thy gentle fires,
 And, though disgraced and slighted, to redeem
 A poet's name, by making thee the theme.
 God, working ever on a social plan,
 By various ties attaches man to man :
 He made at first, though free and unconfined,
 One man the common father of the kind,
 That every tribe, though placed as he sees best,
 Where seas or deserts part them from the rest, 20
 Differing in language, manners, or in face,
 Might feel themselves allied to all the race.
 When Cook—lamented, and with tears as just
 As ever mingled with heroic dust—
 Steered Britain's oak into a world unknown,
 And in his country's glory sought his own,
 Wherever he found man, to nature true,
 The rights of man were sacred in his view ;
 He soothed with gifts, and greeted with a smile,
 The simple native of the new-found isle ; 30
 He spurned the wretch that slighted or withstood
 The tender argument of kindred blood,

Nor would endure that any should control
His freeborn brethren of the southern pole.

But though some nobler minds a law respect,
That none shall with impunity neglect,
In baser souls unnumbered evils meet
To thwart its influence and its end defeat.
While Cook is loved for savage lives he saved,
See Cortez odious for a world enslaved !
Where wast thou then, sweet Charity ! where then,
Thou tutelary friend of helpless men ?
Wast thou in monkish cells and nunneries found,
Or building hospitals on English ground ?
No.—Mammon makes the world his legatee
Through fear, not love ; and Heaven abhors the fee.
Wherever found (and all men need thy care),
Nor age nor infancy could find thee there.
The hand, that slew till it could slay no more,
Was glued to the sword-hilt with Indian gore.
Their prince, as justly seated on his throne
As vain imperial Philip on his own,
Tricked out of all his royalty by art
That stripped him bare and broke his honest heart,
Died by the sentence of a shaven priest,
For scorning what they taught him to detest.
How dark the veil that intercepts the blaze
Of Heaven's mysterious purposes and ways !
God stood not, though he seemed to stand, aloof ;
And at this hour the conqueror feels the proof :
The wreath he won drew down an instant curse,
The fretting plague is in the public purse,
The cankered spoil corrodes the pining state,
Starved by that indolence their mines create.

Oh could their ancient Incas rise again,
How would they take up Israel's taunting strain !
" Art thou too fallen, Iberia ? Do we see
The robber and the murderer weak as we ?
Thou that hast wasted earth, and dared despise
Alike the wrath and mercy of the skies,
Thy pomp is in the grave, thy glory laid
Low in the pits thine avarice has made.
We come with joy from our eternal rest,
To see the oppressor in his turn oppressed.
Art thou the god, the thunder of whose hand
Rolled over all our desolated land,
Shook principalities and kingdoms down,
And made the mountains tremble at his frown ?
The sword shall light upon thy boasted powers,

And waste them, as thy sword has wasted ours."
 'Tis thus Omnipotence his law fulfils,
 And vengeance executes what justice wills.

80

Again—the band of commerce was designed
 To associate all the branches of mankind ;
 And if a boundless plenty be the robe,
 Trade is the golden girdle of the globe.
 Wise to promote whatever end he means,
 God opens fruitful Nature's various scenes :
 Each climate needs what other climes produce,
 And offers something to the general use ;
 No land but listens to the common call,
 And in return receives supply from all.
 This genial intercourse, and mutual aid,
 Cheers what were else a universal shade,
 Calls Nature from her ivy-mantled den,
 And softens human rockwork into men.
 Ingenious Art, with her expressive face,
 Steps forth to fashion and refine the race,
 Not only fills necessity's demand,
 But overcharges her capacious hand :
 Capricious taste itself can crave no more,
 Than she supplies from her abounding store ;
 She strikes out all that luxury can ask,
 And gains new vigour at her endless task.
 Hers is the spacious arch, the shapely spire,
 The painter's pencil, and the poet's lyre ;
 From her the canvas borrows light and shade,
 And verse, more lasting hues that never fade.
 She guides the finger o'er the dancing keys,
 Gives difficulty all the grace of ease,
 And pours a torrent of sweet notes around,
 Fast as the thirsting ear can drink the sound.

90

100

110

These are the gifts of Art, and Art thrives most
 Where commerce has enriched the busy coast ;
 He catches all improvements in his flight,
 Spreads foreign wonders in his country's sight,
 Imports what others have invented well,
 And stirs his own to match them or excel.
 'Tis thus reciprocating, each with each,
 Alternately the nations learn and teach ;
 While Providence enjoins to every soul
 A union with the vast terraqueous whole.

120

Heaven speed the canvas, gallantly unfurled
 To furnish and accommodate a world,
 To give the pole the produce of the sun,
 And knit the unsocial climates into one.

Soft airs and gentie heavings of the wave
 Impel the fleet, whose errand is to save,
 To succour wasted regions, and replace
 The smile of opulence in sorrow's face. 130
 Let nothing adverse, nothing unforeseen,
 Impede the bark that ploughs the deep serene,
 Charged with a freight transcending in its worth
 The gems of India, nature's rarest birth,
 That flies, like Gabriel on his Lord's commands,
 A herald of God's love to pagan lands.
 But ah! what wish can prosper, or what prayer,
 For merchants rich in cargoes of despair,
 Who drive a loathsome traffic, gauge and span
 And buy the muscles and the bones of man? 140
 The tender ties of father, husband, friend,
 All bonds of nature in that moment end;
 And each endures, while yet he draws his breath,
 A stroke as fatal as the scythe of death.
 The sable warrior, frantic with regret
 Of her he loves and never can forget,
 Loses in tears the far receding shore,
 But not the thought that they must meet no more;
 Deprived of her and freedom at a blow,
 What has he left, that he can yet forego? 150
 Yes, to deep sadness sullenly resigned,
 He feels his body's bondage in his mind,
 Puts off his generous nature, and, to suit
 His manners with his fate, puts on the brute.
 O most degrading of all ills, that wait
 On man, a mourner in his best estate!
 All other sorrows virtue may endure,
 And find submission more than half a cure;
 Grief is itself a medicine, and bestowed
 To improve the fortitude that bears the load, 160
 To teach the wanderer, as his woes increase,
 The path of wisdom all whose paths are peace;
 But slavery!—Virtue dreads it as her grave:
 Patience itself is meanness in a slave;
 Or if the will and sovereignty of God
 Bid suffer it awhile and kiss the rod,
 Wait for the dawning of a brighter day,
 And snap the chain the moment when you may.
 Nature imprints upon whate'er we see
 That has a heart and life in it, "Be free!" 170
 The beasts are chartered—neither age nor force
 Can quell the love of freedom in a horse:
 He breaks the cord that held him at the rack;

And, conscious of an unencumbered back,
Snuffs up the morning air, forgets the rein ;
Loose fly his forelock and his ample mane ;
Responsive to the distant neigh, he neighs ;
Nor stops till, overleaping all delays,
He finds the pasture where his fellows graze.

Canst thou, and honoured with a Christian name, 180
Buy what is woman-born, and feel no shame ?
Trade in the blood of innocence, and plead
Expedience as a warrant for the deed ?
So may the wolf, whom famine has made bold
To quit the forest and invade the fold ;
So may the ruffian, who with ghostly glide,
Dagger in hand, steals close to your bedside ;
Not he, but his emergence forced the door,
He found it inconvenient to be poor.

Has God then given its sweetness to the cane, 190
Unless his laws be trampled on—in vain ?
Built a brave world, which cannot yet subsist,
Unless his right to rule it be dismissed ?
Impudent blasphemy ! So folly pleads,
And, avarice being judge, with ease succeeds.

But grant the plea, and let it stand for just,
That man make man his prey, because he *must* :
Still there is room for pity to abate,
And soothe the sorrows of so sad a state.
A Briton knows, or if he knows it not, 200
The Scripture placed within his reach, he ought,
That souls have no discriminating hue,
Alike important in their Maker's view ;
That none are free from blemish since the fall,
And love divine has paid one price for all.
The wretch that works and weeps without relief
Has One that notices his silent grief.

He, from whose hands alone all power proceeds,
Ranks its abuse among the foulest deeds,
Considers *all* injustice with a frown, 210
But *marks* the man, that treads his fellow down.
Begone—the whip and bell in that hard hand
Are hateful ensigns of usurped command.
Not Mexico could purchase kings a claim
To scourge him, weariness his only blame.
Remember, Heaven has an avenging rod,—
To smite the poor is treason against God.

Trouble is grudgingly and hardly brooked,
While life's sublimest joys are overlooked :
We wander o'er a sunburnt thirsty soil, 220

Murmuring and weary of our daily toil,
 Forget to enjoy the palm-tree's offered shade,
 Or taste the fountain in the neighbouring glade ;
 Else who would lose, that had the power to improve,
 The occasion of transmuting fear to love ?

Oh, 'tis a godlike privilege to save,

And he that scorns it is himself a slave.

Inform his mind, one flash of heavenly day
 Would heal his heart, and melt his chains away.

"Beauty for ashes" is a gift indeed,

230

And slaves, by truth enlarged, are doubly freed.

Then would he say, submissive at thy feet,

While gratitude and love made service sweet,

"My dear deliverer out of hopeless night,

Whose bounty bought me but to give me light,

I was a bondman on my native plain,

Sin forged, and ignorance made fast, the chain ;

Thy lips have shed instruction as the dew,

Taught me what path to shun, and what pursue ;

Farewell my former joys ! I sigh no more

240

For Africa's once loved, benighted shore ;

Serving a benefactor I am free ;

At my best home, if not exiled from thee."

Some men make gain a fountain, whence proceeds

A stream of liberal and heroic deeds ;

The swell of pity, not to be confined

Within the scanty limits of the mind,

Disdains the bank, and throws the golden sands,

A rich deposit, on the bordering lands :

These have an ear for His paternal call,

250

Who makes some rich for the supply of all ;

God's gift with pleasure in His praise employ ;

And THORNTON is familiar with the joy.

Oh, could I worship aught beneath the skies,

That earth hath seen, or fancy can devise,

Thine altar, sacred Liberty, should stand,

Built by no mercenary vulgar hand,

With fragrant turf, and flowers as wild and fair

As ever dressed a bank, or scented summer air.

Duly, as ever on the mountain's height

260

The peep of morning shed a dawning light,

Again, when evening in her sober vest

Drew the grey curtain of the fading west,

My soul should yield thee willing thanks and praise,

For the chief blessings of my fairest days :

But that were sacrilege—praise is not thine,

But His who gave thee, and preserves thee mine :

Else I would say, and as I spake bid fly
 A captive bird into the boundless sky,
 "This triple realm adores thee—thou art come 270
 From Sparta hither, and art here at home.
 We feel thy force still active, at this hour
 Enjoy immunity from priestly power,
 While Conscience, happier than in ancient years,
 Owns no superior but the God she fears.
 Propitious spirit! yet expunge a wrong
 Thy rights have suffered, and our land, too long.
 Teach mercy to ten thousand hearts, that share
 The fears and hopes of a commercial care ;
 Prisons expect the wicked, and were built 280
 To bind the lawless, and to punish guilt ;
 But shipwreck, earthquake, battle, fire, and flood,
 Are mighty mischiefs, not to be withstood ;
 And honest merit stands on slippery ground,
 Where covert guile and artifice abound.
 Let just restraint, for public peace designed,
 Chain up the wolves and tigers of mankind ;
 The foe of virtue has no claim to thee,
 But let insolvent innocence go free."

Patron of else the most despised of men, 290
 Accept the tribute of a stranger's pen ;
 Verse, like the laurel its immortal meed,
 Should be the guerdon of a noble deed ;
 I may alarm thee, but I fear the shame
 (Charity chosen as my theme and aim)
 I must incur, forgetting HOWARD's name.
 Blest with all wealth can give thee, to resign
 Joys doubly sweet to feelings quick as thine,
 To quit the bliss thy rural scenes bestow,
 To seek a nobler amidst scenes of woe, 300
 To traverse seas, range kingdoms, and bring home,
 Not the proud monuments of Greece or Rome,
 But knowledge such as only dungeons teach,
 And only sympathy like thine could reach,
 That grief, sequestered from the public stage,
 Might smooth her feathers, and enjoy her cage,
 Speaks a divine ambition, and a zeal,
 The boldest patriot might be proud to feel.
 Oh that the voice of clamour and debate,
 That pleads for peace till it disturbs the state, 310
 Were hushed in favour of thy generous plea,
 The poor thy clients, and Heaven's smile thy fee !

Philosophy, that does not dream or stray,
 Walks arm in arm with Nature all his way,

Compasses earth, dives into it, ascends
 Whatever steep enquiry recommends,
 Sees planetary wonders smoothly roll
 Round other systems under her control,
 Drinks wisdom at the milky stream of light,
 That cheers the silent journey of the night, 320
 And brings at his return a bosom charged
 With rich instruction, and a soul enlarged.
 The treasured sweets of the capacious plan
 That Heaven spreads wide before the view of man,
 All prompt his pleased pursuit, and to pursue
 Still prompt him, with a pleasure always new ;
 He too has a connecting power, and draws
 Man to the centre of the common cause,
 Aiding a dubious and deficient sight
 With a new medium and a purer light. 330
 All truth is precious, if not all divine ;
 And what dilates the powers must needs refine.
 He reads the skies, and, watching every change,
 Provides the faculties an ampler range ;
 And wins mankind, as his attempts prevail,
 A prouder station on the general scale.
 But reason still, unless divinely taught,
 Whate'er she learns, learns nothing as she ought :
 The lamp of revelation only shows,
 What human wisdom cannot but oppose, 340
 That man, in nature's richest mantle clad,
 And graced with all philosophy can add,
 Though fair without, and luminous within,
 Is still the progeny and heir of sin.
 Thus taught, down falls the plumage of his pride ;
 He feels his need of an unerring guide,
 And knows that falling he shall rise no more,
 Unless the power that bade him stand restore.
 This is indeed philosophy ; this known,
 Makes wisdom, worthy of the name, his own : 350
 And without this, whatever he discuss,—
 Whether the space between the stars and us ;
 Whether he measure earth, compute the sea,
 Weigh sunbeams, carve a fly, or spit a flea ;
 The solemn trifler with his boasted skill
 Toils much, and is a solemn trifler still :
 Blind was he born, and, his misguided eyes
 Grown dim in trifling studies, blind he dies.
 Self-knowledge truly learned of course implies
 The rich possession of a nobler prize : 360
 For self to self, and God to man revealed

(Two themes to Nature's eye for ever sealed),
 Are taught by rays, that fly with equal pace
 From the same centre of enlightening grace.
 Here stay thy foot; how copious, and how clear,
 The o'erflowing well of Charity springs here!
 Hark! 'tis the music of a thousand rills,
 Some through the groves, some down the sloping hills,
 Winding a secret or an open course,
 And all supplied from an eternal source. 370
 The ties of nature do but feebly bind,
 And commerce partially reclaims mankind;
Philosophy, without his heavenly guide,
 May blow up self-conceit, and nourish pride,
 But, while his province is the reasoning part,
 Has still a veil of midnight on his heart:
 'Tis truth divine exhibited on earth,
 Gives Charity her being and her birth.

Suppose (when thought is warm and fancy flows,
 What will not argument sometimes suppose?) 380
 An isle possessed by creatures of our kind,
 Endued with reason, yet by nature blind.
 Let supposition lend her aid once more,
 And land some grave optician on the shore:
 He claps his lens, if haply they may see,
 Close to the part where vision ought to be;
 But finds, that, though his tubes assist the sight,
 They cannot give it, or make darkness light.
 He reads wise lectures, and describes aloud
 A sense they know not, to the wondering crowd; 390
 He talks of light, and the prismatic hues,
 As men of depth in erudition use;
 But all he gains for his harangue is—"Well!
 What monstrous lies some travellers will tell!"

The soul, whose sight all-quickenning grace renews,
 Takes the resemblance of the good she views,
 As diamonds, stripped of their opaque disguise,
 Reflect the noonday glory of the skies.
 She speaks of Him, her Author, Guardian, Friend,
 Whose love knew no beginning, knows no end, 400
 In language warm as all that love inspires,
 And, in the glow of her intense desires,
 Pants to communicate her noble fires.
 She sees a world stark blind to what employs
 Her eager thought, and feeds her flowing joys,
 Though wisdom hail them, heedless of her call,
 Flies to save some, and feels a pang for all:
 Herself as weak as her support is strong,

She feels that frailty she denied so long ;
 And, from a knowledge of her own disease, 410
 Learns to compassionate the sick she sees.
 Here see, acquitted of all vain pretence,
 The reign of genuine Charity commence ;
 Though scorn repay her sympathetic tears,
 She still is kind, and still she perseveres ;
 The truth she loves a sightless world blaspheme,
 'Tis childish dotage, a delirious dream.
 The danger they discern not, they deny ;
 Laugh at their only remedy, and die.
 But still a soul thus touched can never cease, 420
 Whoever threatens war, to speak of peace.
 Pure in her aim, and in her temper mild,
 Her wisdom seems the weakness of a child :
 She makes excuses where she might condemn,
 Reviled by those that hate her, prays for them ;
 Suspicion lurks not in her artless breast,
 The worst suggested, she believes the best ;
 Not soon provoked, however stung and teased,
 And, if perhaps made angry, soon appeased ;
 She rather waives than will dispute her right, 430
 And, injured, makes forgiveness her delight.

Such was the portrait an apostle drew,
 The bright original was one he knew,
 Heaven held his hand, the likeness must be true.

When one, that holds communion with the skies,
 Has filled his urn where these pure waters rise,
 And once more mingles with us meaner things,
 'Tis even as if an angel shook his wings ;
 Immortal fragrance fills the circuit wide,
 That tells us whence his treasures are supplied. 440
 So when a ship, well freighted with the stores
 The sun matures on India's spicy shores,
 Has dropped her anchor, and her canvas furled,
 In some safe haven of our western world,
 'Twere vain enquiry to what port she went,
 The gale informs us, laden with the scent.

Some seek, when queasy conscience has its qualms,
 To lull the painful malady with alms ;
 But charity not feigned intends alone
 Another's good—theirs centres in their own ; 450
 And, too short-lived to reach the realms of peace,
 Must cease for ever when the poor shall cease.
 Flavia, most tender of her own good name,
 Is rather careless of a sister's fame :
 Her superfluity the poor supplies,

But, if she touch a character, it dies.
 The seeming virtue weighed against the vice,
 She deems all safe, for she has paid the price :
 No charity but alms aught values she,
 Except in porcelain on her mantel-tree. 460

How many deeds with which the world has rung,
 From pride in league with ignorance have sprung !
 But God o'errules all human follies still,
 And bends the tough materials to his will.
 A conflagration, or a wintry flood,
 Has left some hundreds without home or food ;
 Extravagance and avarice shall subscribe,
 While fame and self-complacence are the bribe.
 The brief proclaimed, it visits every pew,
 But first the Squire's, a compliment but due : 470

With slow deliberation he unties
 His glittering purse, that envy of all eyes,
 And while the clerk just puzzles out the psalm,
 Slides guinea behind guinea in his palm ;
 Till finding, what he might have found before,
 A smaller piece amidst the precious store,
 Pinched close between his finger and his thumb,
 He half exhibits, and then drops the sum.
 Gold to be sure !—Throughout the town 'tis told,
 How the good Squire gives never less than gold. 480
 From motives such as his, though not the best,
 Springs in due time supply for the distressed ;
 Not less effectual than what love bestows,
 Except that office clips it as it goes.

But lest I seem to sin against a friend,
 And wound the grace I mean to recommend,
 (Though vice derided with a just design
 Implies no trespass against love divine,)
 Once more I would adopt the graver style ;
 A teacher should be sparing of his smile. 490

Unless a love of virtue light the flame,
 Satire is, more than those he brands, to blame ;
 He hides behind a magisterial air
 His own offences, and strips others bare ;
 Affects indeed a most humane concern,
 That men, if gently tutored, will not learn ;
 That mulish folly, not to be reclaimed
 By softer methods, must be made ashamed ;
 But (I might instance in St. Patrick's dean)
 Too often rails to gratify his spleen. 500
 Most satirists are indeed a public scourge ;
 Their mildest physic is a farrier's purge ;

Their acrid temper turns, as soon as stirred,
 The milk of their good purpose all to curd.
 Their zeal begotten, as their works rehearse,
 By lean despair upon an empty purse,
 The wild assassins start into the street,
 Prepared to poniard whomsoe'er they meet.
 No skill in swordsmanship, however just,
 Can be secure against a madman's thrust !
 And even virtue so unfairly matched,
 Although immortal, may be pricked or scratched.
 When scandal has new-minted an old lie,
 Or taxed invention for a fresh supply,
 'Tis called a satire, and the world appears
 Gathering around it with erected ears ;
 A thousand names are tossed into the crowd ;
 Some whispered softly, and some twanged aloud ;
 Just as the sapience of an author's brain
 Suggests it safe or dangerous to be plain.
 Strange ! how the frequent interjected dash
 Quickens a market, and helps off the trash ;
 The important letters that include the rest
 Serve as a key to those that are suppressed ;
 Conjecture gripes the victims in his paw,
 The world is charmed, and Scrib escapes the law.
 So, when the cold damp shades of night prevail,
 Worms may be caught by either head or tail ;
 Forcibly drawn from many a close recess,
 They meet with little pity, no redress ;
 Plunged in the stream, they lodge upon the mud,
 Food for the famished rovers of the flood.

510

520

530

All zeal for a reform that gives offence
 To peace and charity, is mere pretence ;
 A bold remark, but which, if well applied,
 Would humble many a towering poet's pride.
 Perhaps the man was in a sportive fit,
 And had no other play-place for his wit ;
 Perhaps, enchanted with the love of fame,
 He sought the jewel in his neighbour's shame ;
 Perhaps—whatever end he might pursue,
 The cause of virtue could not be his view.
 At every stroke wit flashes in our eyes ;
 The turns are quick, the polished points surprise,
 But shine with cruel and tremendous charms,
 That, while they please, possess us with alarms :
 So have I seen, (and hastened to the sight
 On all the wings of holiday delight,)
 Where stands that monument of ancient power,

540

Named with emphatic dignity, the Tower,
Guns, halberts, swords, and pistols, great and small,
In starry forms disposed upon the wall ;
We wonder, as we gazing stand below,
That brass and steel should make so fine a show ;
But though we praise the exact designer's skill,
Account them implements of mischief still.

550

No works shall find acceptance in that day,
When all disguises shall be rent away,
That square not truly with the Scripture plan,
Nor spring from love to God, or love to man.

560

As He ordains things sordid in their birth
To be resolved into their parent earth,
And, though the soul shall seek superior orbs,
Whate'er this world produces, it absorbs,
So self starts nothing, but what tends apace
Home to the goal, where it began the race.
Such as our motive is our aim must be ;
If this be servile that can ne'er be free :
If self employ us, whatsoe'er is wrought,
We glorify that self, not Him we ought ;
Such virtues had need prove their own reward,
The Judge of all men owes them no regard.

570

True Charity, a plant divinely nursed,
Fed by the love from which it rose at first,
Thrives against hope, and in the rudest scene
Storms but enliven its unfading green ;
Exuberant is the shadow it supplies,
Its fruit on earth, its growth above the skies.
To look at Him, who formed us and redeemed,
So glorious now, though once so disesteemed,
To see a God stretch forth His human hand,
To uphold the boundless scenes of His command ;
To recollect, that, in a form like ours,
He bruised beneath His feet the infernal powers,
Captivity led captive, rose to claim
The wreath He won so dearly in our name ;
That, throned above all height, He condescends
To call the few that trust in Him His friends ;
That, in the heaven of heavens, that space He deems
Too scanty for the exertion of His beams,
And shines, as if impatient to bestow
Life and a kingdom upon worms below ;
That sight imparts a never-dying flame,
Though feeble in degree, in kind the same.
Like Him, the soul thus kindled from above
Spreads wide her arms of universal love ;

580

590

And, still enlarged as she receives the grace,
 Includes creation in her close embrace.
 Behold a Christian !—and without the fires
 The Founder of that name alone inspires,
 Though all accomplishments, all knowledge meet
 To make the shining prodigy complete,
 Whoever boasts that name—behold a cheat !

600

Were love, in these the world's last doting years,
 As frequent as the want of it appears,
 The churches warmed, they would no longer hold
 Such frozen figures, stiff as they are cold ;
 Relenting forms would lose their power, or cease,
 And even the dipped and sprinkled live in peace :
 Each heart would quit its prison in the breast,
 And flow in free communion with the rest.
 The statesman, skilled in projects dark and deep,
 Might burn his useless Machiavel, and sleep ;
 His budget, often filled, yet always poor,
 Might swing at ease behind his study door,
 No longer prey upon our annual rents,
 Nor scare the nation with its big contents :
 Disbanded legions freely might depart,
 And slaying man would cease to be an art.
 No learned disputants would take the field,
 Sure not to conquer, and sure not to yield ;
 Both sides deceived, if rightly understood,
 Pelting each other for the public good.
 Did Charity prevail, the press would prove
 A vehicle of virtue, truth, and love ;
 And I might spare myself the pains to show
 What few can learn, and all suppose they know.

610

620

Thus have I sought to grace a serious lay
 With many a wild, indeed, but flowery spray,
 In hopes to gain, what else I must have lost,
 The attention pleasure has so much engrossed.
 But if, unhappily deceived, I dream,
 And prove too weak for so divine a theme,
 Let Charity forgive me a mistake
 That zeal, not vanity, has chanced to make,
 And spare the poet for his subject's sake.

630

CONVERSATION.

Nam neque me tantum venientis sibilus austri,
Nec percussa juvant fluctû tam litora, nec quæ
Saxosas inter decurrunt flumina valles.

VIRG. *Ecl.* v.

THOUGH nature weigh our talents, and dispense
To every man his modicum of sense,
And Conversation in its better part
May be esteemed a gift, and not an art,
Yet much depends, as in the tiller's toil,
On culture, and the sowing of the soil.
Words learned by rote a parrot may rehearse,
But talking is not always to converse;
Not more distinct from harmony divine
The constant creaking of a country sign. 10
As alphabets in ivory employ,
Hour after hour, the yet unlettered boy,
Sorting and puzzling with a deal of glee
Those seeds of science called his A B C,
So language in the mouths of the adult,
Witness its insignificant result,
Too often proves an implement of play,
A toy to sport with, and pass time away.
Collect at evening what the day brought forth,
Compress the sum into its solid worth, 20
And if it weigh the importance of a fly,
The scales are false, or algebra a lie.
Sacred interpreter of human thought,
How few respect or use thee as they ought!
But all shall give account of every wrong,
Who dare dishonour or defile the tongue,
Who prostitute it in the cause of vice,
Or sell their glory at a market-price,
Who vote for hire, or point it with lampoon,
The dear-bought placeman, and the cheap buffoon. 30
There is a prurience in the speech of some,
Wrath stays Him, or else God would strike them dumb;
His wise forbearance has their end in view
They fill their measure, and receive their due.
The heathen lawgivers of ancient days,
Names almost worthy of a Christian's praise,
Would drive them forth from the resort of men,
And shut up every satyr in his den.
Oh come not ye near innocence and truth,
Ye worms that eat into the bud of youth! 40

Infectious as impure, your blighting power
 Taints in its rudiments the promised flower ;
 Its odour perished and its charming hue,
 Thenceforth 'tis hateful, for it smells of you.
 Not even the vigorous and headlong rage
 Of adolescence, or a firmer age,
 Affords a plea allowable or just
 For making speech the pamperer of lust ;
 But when the breath of age commits the fault,
 'Tis nauseous as the vapour of a vault.
 So withered stumps disgrace the sylvan scene,
 No longer fruitful and no longer green ;
 The sapless wood, divested of the bark,
 Grows fungous, and takes fire at every spark.

50

Oaths terminate, as Paul observes, all strife—
 Some men have surely then a peaceful life !
 Whatever subject occupy discourse,
 The feats of Vestris, or the naval force,
 Asseveration blustering in your face
 Makes contradiction such a hopeless case.
 In every tale they tell, or false or true,
 Well known, or such as no man ever knew,
 They fix attention, heedless of your pain,
 With oaths like rivets forced into the brain ;
 And even when sober truth prevails throughout,
 They swear it, till affirmance breeds a doubt.
 A Persian, humble servant of the sun,
 Who, though devout, yet bigotry had none,
 Hearing a lawyer, grave in his address,
 With adjurations every word impress,
 Supposed the man a bishop, or at least,
 God's name so much upon his lips, a priest ;
 Bowed at the close with all his graceful airs,
 And begged an interest in his frequent prayers.

60

70

Go, quit the rank to which ye stood preferred,
 Henceforth associate in one common herd ;
 Religion, virtue, reason, common sense,
 Pronounce your human form a false pretence,
 A mere disguise in which a devil lurks,
 Who yet betrays his secret by his works.

80

Ye powers who rule the tongue, if such there are,
 And make colloquial happiness your care,
 Preserve me from the thing I dread and hate,
 A duel in the form of a debate.
 The clash of arguments and jar of words,
 Worse than the mortal brunt of rival swords,
 Decide no question with their tedious length,

(For opposition gives opinion strength,)
Divert the champions prodigal of breath,
And put the peaceably-disposed to death. 90
Oh thwart me not, Sir Soph., at every turn,
Nor carp at every flaw you may discern ;
Though syllogisms hang not on my tongue,
I am not surely always in the wrong ;
'Tis hard if all is false that I advance,
A fool must now and then be right by chance.
Not that all freedom of dissent I blame ;
No,—there I grant the privilege I claim.
A disputable point is no man's ground,
Rove where you please, 'tis common all around. 100
Discourse may want an animated No,
To brush the surface, and to make it flow ;
But still remember, if you mean to please,
To press your point with modesty and ease.
The mark at which my juster aim I take
Is contradiction for its own dear sake.
Set your opinion at whatever pitch,
Knots and impediments make something hitch ;
Adopt his own, 'tis equally in vain,
Your thread of argument is snapped again ; 110
The wrangler, rather than accord with you,
Will judge himself deceived, and prove it too.
Vociferated logic kills me quite,
A noisy man is always in the right ;
I twirl my thumbs, fall back into my chair,
Fix on the wainscot a distressful stare,
And when I hope his blunders are all out,
Reply discreetly, " To be sure—no doubt."
Dubius is such a scrupulous good man,—
Yes, you may catch him tripping if you can. 120
He would not with a peremptory tone
Assert the nose upon his face his own ;
With hesitation admirably slow,
He humbly hopes—presumes—it may be so.
His evidence, if he were called by law
To swear to some enormity he saw,
For want of prominence and just relief,
Would hang an honest man, and save a thief.
Through constant dread of giving truth offence,
He ties up all his hearers in suspense ; 130
Knows what he knows, as if he knew it not ;
What he remembers seems to have forgot ;
His sole opinion, whatsoe'er befall,
Centering at last in having none at all.

Yet though he tease and baulk your listening ear,
 He makes one useful point exceeding clear ;
 Howe'er ingenious on his darling theme
 A sceptic in philosophy may seem,
 Reduced to practice, his beloved rule
 Would only prove him a consummate fool ;
 Useless in him alike both brain and speech,
 Fate having placed all truth above his reach ;
 His ambiguities his total sum,
 He might as well be blind and deaf and dumb.

140

Where men of judgment creep and feel their way,
 The positive pronounce without dismay,
 Their want of light and intellect supplied
 By sparks absurdity strikes out of pride :
 Without the means of knowing right from wrong,
 They always are decisive, clear, and strong ;
 Where others toil with philosophic force,
 Their nimble nonsense takes a shorter course,
 Flings at your head conviction in the lump,
 And gains remote conclusions at a jump ;
 Their own defect, invisible to them,
 Seen in another they at once condemn,
 And, though self-idolized in every case,
 Hate their own likeness in a brother's face.
 The cause is plain and not to be denied,
 The proud are always most provoked by pride ;
 Few competitions but engender spite,
 And those the most where neither has a right.

150

160

The point of honour has been deemed of use
 To teach good manners and to curb abuse ;
 Admit it true, the consequence is clear,
 Our polished manners are a mask we wear,
 And at the bottom, barbarous still and rude,
 We are restrained indeed, but not subdued.
 The very remedy, however sure,
 Springs from the mischief it intends to cure,
 And savage in its principle appears,
 Tried, as it should be, by the fruit it bears.
 'Tis hard indeed, if nothing will defend
 Mankind from quarrels but their fatal end ;
 That now and then a hero must de cease
 That the surviving world may live in peace.
 Perhaps at last close scrutiny may show
 The practice dastardly and mean and low,
 That men engage in it compelled by force,
 And fear, not courage, is its proper source :
 The fear of tyrant custom, and the fear

170

180

Lest fops should censure us, and fools should sneer.
 At least to trample on our Maker's laws,
 And hazard life for any or no cause,
 To rush into a fixed eternal state
 Out of the very flames of rage and hate,
 Or send another shivering to the bar
 With all the guilt of such unnatural war,
 Whatever use may urge, or honour plead,
 On reason's verdict is a madman's deed.

190

Am I to set my life upon a throw,
 Because a bear is rude and surly? No.
 A moral, sensible, and well-bred man
 Will not affront me,—and no other can.
 Were I empowered to regulate the lists,
 They should encounter with well-loaded fists;
 A Trojan combat would be something new,
 Let DARES beat ENTELLUS black and blue;
 Then each might show to his admiring friends
 In honourable bumps his rich amends,
 And carry in contusions of his skull
 A satisfactory receipt in full.

200

A story in which native humour reigns
 Is often useful, always entertains;
 A graver fact enlisted on your side
 May furnish illustration, well applied;
 But sedentary weavers of long tales
 Give me the fidgets, and my patience fails.
 'Tis the most asinine employ on earth,
 To hear them tell of parentage and birth,
 And echo conversations dull and dry,
 Embellished with—*he said*, and *so said I*.
 At every interview their route the same,
 The repetition makes attention lame;
 We bustle up with unsuccessful speed,
 And in the saddest part cry—"Droll indeed!"
 The path of narrative with care pursue,
 Still making probability your clue,
 On all the vestiges of truth attend,
 And let *them* guide you to a decent end.
 Of all ambitions man may entertain,
 The worst that can invade a sickly brain
 Is that which angles hourly for surprise,
 And baits its hook with prodigies and lies.
 Credulous infancy or age as weak
 Are fittest auditors for such to seek,
 Who to please others will themselves disgrace,
 Yet please not, but affront you to your face.

210

220

A great retailer of this curious ware,
 Having unloaded, and made many stare, 230
 "Can this be true?" an arch observer cries:
 "Yes" (rather moved), "I saw it with these eyes."
 "Sir! I believe it on that ground alone;
 I could not had I seen it with my own."

A tale should be judicious, clear, succinct,
 The language plain, and incidents well linked.
 Tell not as new what everybody knows,
 And, new or old, still hasten to a close;
 There, centering in a focus round and neat,
 Let all your rays of information meet. 240
 What neither yields us profit nor delight
 Is like a nurse's lullaby at night;
 Guy Earl of Warwick and fair Eleanore,
 Or giant-killing Jack, would please me more.

The pipe, with solemn interposing puff,
 Makes half a sentence at a time enough;
 The dozing sages drop the drowsy strain,
 Then pause, and puff—and speak, and pause again.
 Such often, like the tube they so admire,
 Important triflers! have more smoke than fire. 250
 Pernicious weed! whose scent the fair annoys,
 Unfriendly to society's chief joys,
 Thy worst effect is banishing for hours
 The sex whose presence civilizes ours.
 Thou art indeed the drug a gardener wants,
 To poison vermin that infest his plants;
 But are we so to wit and beauty blind
 As to despise the glory of our kind,
 And show the softest minds and fairest forms
 As little mercy as he grubs and worms? 260
 They dare not wait the riotous abuse
 Thy thirst-creating steams at length produce,
 When wine has given indecent language birth,
 And forced the flood-gates of licentious mirth;
 For sea-born Venus her attachment shows
 Still to that element from which she rose,
 And with a quiet which no fumes disturb
 Sips meek infusions of a milder herb.

The emphatic speaker dearly loves to oppose
 In contact inconvenient, nose to nose; 270
 As if the gnomon on his neighbour's phiz,
 Touched with the magnet, had attracted his.
 His whispered theme, dilated and at large,
 Proves after all a wind-gun's airy charge,
 An extract of his diary—no more,

A tasteless journal of the day before.
 He walked abroad, o'ertaken in the rain
 Called on a friend, drank tea, stepped home again;
 Resumed his purpose, had a world of talk
 With one he stumbled on, and lost his walk.

280

I interrupt him with a sudden bow,
 "Adieu, dear Sir! lest you should lose it now."

I cannot talk with civet in the room,
 A fine puss-gentleman that's all perfume;
 The sight's enough—no need to smell a beau—
 Who thrusts his nose into a raree show?

His odoriferous attempts to please
 Perhaps might prosper with a swarm of bees;
 But we that make no honey, though we sting,
 Poets, are sometimes apt to maul the thing.

290

'Tis wrong to bring into a mixed resort
 What makes some sick, and others *à-la-mort*,
 An argument of cogence, we may say,
 Why such a one should keep himself away.

A graver coxcomb we may sometimes see,
 Quite as absurd, though not so light as he:
 A shallow brain behind a serious mask,

An oracle within an empty cask,
 The solemn fop; significant and budge;
 A fool with judges, amongst fools a judge;
 He says but little, and that little said
 Owes all its weight, like loaded dice, to lead.

300

His wit invites you by his looks to come,
 But when you knock it never is at home:
 'Tis like a parcel sent you by the stage,
 Some handsome present, as your hopes presage;
 'Tis heavy, bulky, and bids fair to prove
 An absent friend's fidelity and love;

But when unpacked your disappointment groans
 To find it stuffed with brickbats, earth, and stones.

310

Some men employ their health, an ugly trick,
 In making known how oft they have been sick,
 And give us in recitals of disease

A doctor's trouble, but without the fees;
 Relate how many weeks they kept their bed,
 How an emetic or cathartic sped;
 Nothing is slightly touched, much less forgot,
 Nose, ears, and eyes seem present on the spot.
 Now the distemper, spite of draught or pill,
 Victorious seemed, and now the doctor's skill;

320

And now—alas for unforeseen mishaps!
 They put on a damp nightcap and relapse;

They thought they must have died, they were so bad ;
 Their peevish hearers almost wish they had.

Some fretful tempers wince at every touch,
 You always do too little or too much :
 You speak with life, in hopes to entertain,—
 Your elevated voice goes through the brain ;
 You fall at once into a lower key,—
 That's worse, the drone-pipe of an humble-bee.

330

The southern sash admits too strong a light,
 You rise and drop the curtain—now it's night ;
 He shakes with cold ;—you stir the fire and strive
 To make a blaze—that's roasting him alive.
 Serve him with venison, and he chooses fish ;
 With sole—that's just the sort he would not wish :
 He takes what he at first professed to loathe,
 And in due time feeds heartily on both ;
 Yet still, o'erclouded with a constant frown,
 He does not swallow, but he gulps it down.
 Your hope to please him vain on every plan,
 Himself should work that wonder, if he can—
 Alas ! his efforts double his distress,
 He likes yours little, and his own still less.
 Thus always teasing others, always teased,
 His only pleasure is—to be displeased.

340

I pity bashful men, who feel the pain
 Of fancied scorn and undeserved disdain,
 And bear the marks upon a blushing face
 Of needless shame, and self-imposed disgrace.

350

Our sensibilities are so acute,
 The fear of being silent makes us mute.
 We sometimes think we could a speech produce
 Much to the purpose, if our tongues were loose ;
 But being tied, it dies upon the lip,
 Faint as a chicken's note that has the pip :
 Our wasted oil unprofitably burns,
 Like hidden lamps in old sepulchral urns.
 Few Frenchmen of this evil have complained ;
 It seems as if we Britons were ordained,
 By way of wholesome curb upon our pride,
 To fear each other, fearing none beside.

360

The cause perhaps inquiry may descry,
 Self-searching with an introverted eye,
 Concealed within an unsuspected part,
 The vainest corner of our own vain heart :
 For ever aiming at the world's esteem,
 Our self-importance ruins its own scheme ;
 In other eyes our talents rarely shown

Become at length so splendid in our own,
We dare not risk them into public view,
Lest they miscarry of what seems their due.
True modesty is a discerning grace,
And only blushes in the proper place ;
But counterfeit is blind, and skulks through fear,
Where 'tis a shame to be ashamed to appear :
Humility the parent of the first,
The last by vanity produced and nursed.
The circle formed, we sit in silent state,
Like figures drawn upon a dial-plate ;
" Yes, Ma'am," and " No, Ma'am," uttered softly, show
Every five minutes how the minutes go ;
Each individual, suffering a constraint
Poetry may, but colours cannot paint,
As if in close committee on the sky,
Reports it hot or cold, or wet or dry ;
And finds a changing clime a happy source
Of wise reflection, and well-timed discourse.
We next inquire, but softly and by stealth,
Like conservators of the public health,
Of epidemic throats, if such there are,
And coughs, and rheums, and phthisic, and catarrh.
That theme exhausted, a wide chasm ensues,
Filled up at last with interesting news,
Who danced with whom, and who are like to wed,
And who is hanged, and who is brought to bed ;
But fear to call a more important cause,
As if 'twere treason against English laws.
The visit paid, with ecstasy we come,
As from a seven years' transportation, home,
And there resume an unembarrassed brow,
Recovering what we lost we know not how,
The faculties that seemed reduced to nought,
Expression and the privilege of thought.
The reeking roaring hero of the chase,
I give him over as a desperate case.
Physicians write in hopes to work a cure,
Never, if honest ones, when death is sure ;
And though the fox he follows may be tamed,
A mere fox-follower never is reclaimed.
Some farrier should prescribe his proper course,
Whose only fit companion is his horse,
Or if, deserving of a better doom,
The noble beast judge otherwise, his groom.
Yet even the rogue that serves him, though he stand,
To take his honour's orders cap in hand,

Prefers his fellow-grooms, with much good sense ;
 Their skill a truth, his master's a pretence.
 If neither horse nor groom affect the squire,
 Where can at last his jockeyship retire ?
 Oh to the club, the scene of savage joys,
 The school of coarse good fellowship and noise ;
 There, in the sweet society of those
 Whose friendship from his boyish years he chose,
 Let him improve his talent if he can,
 Till none but beasts acknowledge him a man.

420

Man's heart had been impenetrably sealed,
 Like theirs that cleave the flood or graze the field,
 Had not his Maker's all-bestowing hand
 Given him a soul, and bade him understand ;
 The reasoning power vouchsafed of course inferred
 The power to clothe that reason with his word ;
 For all is perfect that God works on earth,
 And He that gives conception adds the birth.
 If this be plain, 'tis plainly understood
 What uses of his boon the Giver would.

430

The mind, despatched upon her busy toil,
 Should range where Providence has blessed the soil ;

Visiting every flower with labour meet,
 And gathering all her treasures sweet by sweet,
 She should imbue the tongue with what she sips,
 And shed the balmy blessing on the lips,
 That good diffused may more abundant grow,
 And speech may praise the power that bids it flow.

440

Will the sweet warbler of the livelong night,
 That fills the listening lover with delight,
 Forget his harmony, with rapture heard,
 To learn the twittering of a meaner bird,
 Or make the parrot's mimicry his choice,
 That odious libel on a human voice ?

450

No—nature, unsophisticate by man,
 Starts not aside from her Creator's plan ;
 The melody that was at first designed
 To cheer the rude forefathers of mankind
 Is note for note delivered in our ears,
 In the last scene of her six thousand years.

Yet fashion, leader of a chattering train,
 Whom man for his own hurt permits to reign,
 Who shifts and changes all things but his shape,
 And would degrade her votary to an ape,

460

The fruitful parent of abuse and wrong,
 Holds a usurped dominion o'er his tongue ;
 There sits and prompts him with his own disgrace,

Prescribes the theme, the tone, and the grimace,
And, when accomplished in her wayward school,
Calls gentleman whom she has made a fool.

'Tis an unalterable fixed decree,
That none could frame or ratify but she,
That Heaven and Hell, and righteousness and sin,
Snarers in his path, and foes that lurk within,
God and His attributes (a field of day
Where 'tis an angel's happiness to stray),
Fruits of his love and wonders of his might,
Be never named in ears esteemed polite.

470

That he who dares, when she forbids, be grave,
Shall stand proscribed a madman or a knave,
A close designer not to be believed,
Or, if excused that charge, at least deceived.

Oh folly worthy of the nurse's lap,
Give it the breast, or stop its mouth with pap!
Is it incredible, or can it seem

480

A dream to any, except those that dream,
That man should love his Maker, and *that* fire,
Warming his heart, should at his lips transpire?
Know then, and modestly let fall your eyes,
And veil your daring crest that braves the skies,
That air of insolence affronts your God,
You need his pardon, and provoke his rod:

Now, in a posture that becomes you more
Than that heroic strut assumed before,

490

Know, your arrears with every hour accrue
For mercy shown, while wrath is justly due.
The time is short, and there are souls on earth,
Though future pain may serve for present mirth,
Acquainted with the woes that fear or shame,
By fashion taught, forbade them once to name,
And, having felt the pangs you deem a jest,
Have proved them truths too big to be expressed.

Go seek on revelation's hallowed ground,
Sure to succeed, the remedy they found;
Touched by that power that you have dared to mock,
That makes seas stable, and dissolves the rock,
Your heart shall yield a life-renewing stream,
That fools, as you have done, shall call a dream.

500

It happened on a solemn eventide,
Soon after He that was our surety died,
Two bosom friends, each pensively inclined,
The scene of all those sorrows left behind,
Sought their own village, busied as they went
In musings worthy of the great event:

510

They spake of him they loved, of him whose life,
 Though blameless, had incurred perpetual strife,
 Whose deeds had left, in spite of hostile arts,
 A deep memorial graven on their hearts.

\ The recollection, like a vein of ore,
 The farther traced, enriched them still the more ;
 They thought him, and they justly thought him, one
 Sent to do more than he appeared to have done,
 To exalt a people, and to place them high
 Above all else, and wondered he should die. 520
 Ere yet they brought their journey to an end,
 A stranger joined them, courteous as a friend,
 And asked them with a kind engaging air
 What their affliction was, and begged a share.
 Informed, he gathered up the broken thread,
 And, truth and wisdom gracing all he said,
 Explained, illustrated, and searched so well
 The tender theme, on which they chose to dwell,
 That, reaching home, "The night," they said, "is near,
 We must not now be parted, sojourn here." 530
 The new acquaintance soon became a guest,
 And, made so welcome at their simple feast,
 He blessed the bread, but vanished at the word,
 And left them both exclaiming, "'Twas the Lord !
 Did not our hearts feel all he deigned to say,
 Did they not burn within us by the way ? "

Now theirs was converse such as it behoves
 Man to maintain, and such as God approves :
 Their views indeed were indistinct and dim,
 But yet successful, being aimed at him. 540
 Christ and his character their only scope,
 Their object, and their subject, and their hope,
 They felt what it became them much to feel,
 And wanting him to loose the sacred seal,
 Found him as prompt, as their desire was true,
 To spread the newborn glories in their view.

Well—what are ages and the lapse of time
 Matched against truths as lasting as sublime ?
 Can length of years on God himself exact ?
 Or make that fiction which was once a fact ? 550
 No—marble and recording brass decay,
 And like the graver's memory pass away ;
 The works of man inherit, as is just,
 Their author's frailty, and return to dust :
 But truth divine for ever stands secure,
 Its head as guarded as its base is sure ;
 Fixed in the rolling flood of endless years

The pillar of the eternal plan appears,
 The raving storm and dashing wave defies,
 Built by that Architect who built the skies. 560
 Hearts may be found that harbour at this hour
 That love of Christ in all its quickening power,
 And lips unstained by folly or by strife,
 Whose wisdom, drawn from the deep well of life,
 Tastes of its healthful origin, and flows
 A Jordan for the ablution of our woes.
 O days of heaven, and nights of equal praise,
 Serene and peaceful as those heavenly days,
 When souls drawn upwards, in communion sweet,
 Enjoy the stillness of some close retreat, 570
 Discourse, as if released and safe at home,
 Of dangers past and wonders yet to come,
 And spread the sacred treasures of the breast
 Upon the lap of covenanted rest.

"What, always dreaming over heavenly things,
 Like angel-heads in stone with pigeon-wings?
 Canting and whining out all day the word,
 And half the night? fanatic and absurd!
 Mine be the friend less frequent in his prayers,
 Who makes no bustle with his soul's affairs, 580
 Whose wit can brighten up a wintry day,
 And chase the splenetic dull hours away;
 Content on earth in earthly things to shine,
 Who waits for heaven ere he becomes divine,
 Leaves saints to enjoy those altitudes they teach,
 And plucks the fruit placed more within his reach."

Well spoken, advocate of sin and shame,
 Known by thy bleating, Ignorance thy name.
 Is sparkling wit the world's exclusive right?
 The fixed fee-simple of the vain and light? 590
 Can hopes of heaven, bright prospects of an hour
 That comes to waft us out of sorrow's power,
 Obscure or quench a faculty, that finds
 Its happiest soil in the serenest minds?
 Religion curbs indeed its wanton play,
 And brings the trifler under rigorous sway,
 But gives it usefulness unknown before,
 And purifying, makes it shine the more.
 A Christian's wit is inoffensive light, —
 A beam that aids but never grieves the sight; 600
 Vigorous in age as in the flush of youth,
 'Tis always active on the side of truth;
 Temperance and peace insure its healthful state,
 And make it brightest at its latest date.

Oh I have seen (nor hope perhaps in vain,
 Ere life go down, to see such sights again)
 A veteran warrior in the Christian field,
 Who never saw the sword he could not wield;
 Grave without dulness, learned without pride,
 Exact, yet not precise, though meek, keen-eyed; 610
 A man that would have foiled at their own play
 A dozen would-be's of the modern day;
 Who, when occasion justified its use,
 Had wit as bright as ready to produce,
 Could fetch from records of an earlier age,
 Or from philosophy's enlightened page,
 His rich materials, and regale your ear
 With strains it was a privilege to hear!
 Yet above all his luxury supreme,
 And his chief glory, was the gospel theme; 620
 There he was copious as old Greece or Rome,
 His happy eloquence seemed there at home,
 Ambitious not to shine or to excel,
 But to treat justly what he loved so well.

It moves me more perhaps than folly ought,
 When some green heads, as void of wit as thought,
 Suppose themselves monopolists of sense,
 And wiser men's ability pretence.
 Though time will wear us, and we must grow old,
 Such men are not forgot as soon as cold, 630
 Their fragrant memory will outlast their tomb,
 Embalmed for ever in its own perfume.
 And to say truth, though, in its early prime,
 And when unstained with any grosser crime,
 Youth has a sprightliness and fire to boast
 That in the valley of decline are lost,
 And virtue with peculiar charms appears,
 Crowned with the garland of life's blooming years;
 Yet Age, by long experience well informed,
 Well read, well tempered, with religion warmed, 640
 That fire abated, which impels rash youth,
 Proud of his speed, to overshoot the truth,
 As time improves the grape's authentic juice,
 Mellows and makes the speech more fit for use,
 And claims a reverence in its shortening day
 That 'tis an honour and a joy to pay.
 The fruits of age, less fair, are yet more sound
 Than those a brighter season pours around;
 And, like the stores autumnal suns mature,
 Through wintry rigours unimpaired endure. 650
 What is fanatic frenzy, scorned so much,

And dreaded more than a contagious touch ?
 I grant it dangerous, and approve your fear,
 That fire is catching if you draw too near ;
 But sage observers oft mistake the flame,
 And give true piety that odious name.
 To tremble (as the creature of an hour
 Ought at the view of an Almighty power)
 Before His presence, at whose awful throne
 All tremble in all worlds, except our own ; 660
 To supplicate his mercy, love his ways,
 And prize them above pleasure, wealth, or praise,
 Though common sense, allowed a casting voice,
 And free from bias, must approve the choice,
 Convicts a man fanatic in the extreme,
 And wild as madness in the world's esteem.
 But that disease, when soberly defined,
 Is the false fire of an o'erheated mind ;
 It views the truth with a distorted eye,
 And either warps or lays it useless by ; 670
 'Tis narrow, selfish, arrogant, and draws
 Its sordid nourishment from man's applause ;
 And while at heart sin unrelinquished lies,
 Presumes itself chief favourite of the skies.
 'Tis such a light as putrefaction breeds
 In fly-blown flesh, whereon the maggot feeds,
 Shines in the dark, but, ushered into day,
 The stench remains, the lustre dies away.
 True bliss, if man may reach it, is composed
 Of hearts in union mutually disclosed ; 680
 And, farewell else all hope of pure delight,
 Those hearts should be reclaimed, renewed, upright.
 Bad men, profaning friendship's hallowed name,
 Form, in its stead, a covenant of shame,
 A dark confederacy against the laws
 Of virtue, and religion's glorious cause :
 They build each other up with dreadful skill,
 As bastions set point blank against God's will ;
 Enlarge and fortify the dread redoubt,
 Deeply resolved to shut a Saviour out : 690
 Call legions up from hell to back the deed ;
 And, curst with conquest, finally succeed.
 But souls that carry on a blest exchange
 Of joys they meet with in their heavenly range,
 And with a fearless confidence make known
 The sorrows sympathy esteems its own,
 Daily derive increasing light and force
 From such communion in their pleasant course,
 o

Feel less the journey's roughness and its length,
 Meet their opposers with united strength, 700
 And, one in heart, in interest, and design,
 Gird up each other to the race divine.

But Conversation, choose what theme we may,
 And chiefly when religion leads the way,
 Should flow, like waters after summer showers,
 Not as if raised by mere mechanic powers.
 The Christian in whose soul, though now distressed,
 Lives the dear thought of joys he once possessed,
 When all his glowing language issued forth
 With God's deep stamp upon its current worth, 710
 Will speak without disguise, and must impart,
 Sad as it is, his undissembling heart,
 Abhors constraint, and dares not feign a zeal,
 Or seem to boast a fire he does not feel.
 The song of Sion is a tasteless thing,
 Unless, when rising on a joyful wing,
 The soul can mix with the celestial bands,
 And give the strain the compass it demands.

Strange tidings these to tell a world who treat
 All but their own experience as deceit! 720
 Will they believe, though credulous enough
 To swallow much upon much weaker proof,
 That there are blest inhabitants of earth,
 Partakers of a new ethereal birth,
 Their hopes, desires, and purposes estranged
 From things terrestrial, and divinely changed,
 Their very language of a kind that speaks
 The soul's sure interest in the good she seeks,
 Who deal with Scripture, its importance felt,
 As Tully with philosophy once dealt, 730
 And in the silent watches of the night,
 And through the scenes of toil-renewing light,
 The social walk, or solitary ride,
 Keep still the dear companion at their side?
 No—shame upon a self-disgracing age,
 God's work may serve an ape upon a stage
 With such a jest as filled with hellish glee
 Certain invisibles as shrewd as he;
 But veneration or respect finds none,
 Save from the subjects of that work alone. 740
 The world grown old her deep discernment shows,
 Claps spectacles on her sagacious nose,
 Peruses closely the true Christian's face,
 And finds it a mere mask of sly grimace;
 Usurps God's office, lays his bosom bare,

And finds hypocrisy close-lurking there ; —
 And, serving God herself through mere constraint,
 Concludes his unfeigned love of him a feint.
 And yet, God knows, look human nature through
 (And in due time the world shall know it too) 750
 That since the flowers of Eden felt the blast,
 That after man's defection laid all waste,
 Sincerity towards the heart-searching God
 Has made the new-born creature her abode,
 Nor shall be found in unregenerate souls,
 Till the last fire burn all between the poles.
 Sincerity ! Why 'tis his only pride ; —
 Weak and imperfect in all grace beside,
 He knows that God demands his heart entire,
 And gives him all his just demands require. 760
 Without it, his pretensions were as vain
 As, having it, he deems the world's disdain ;
 That great defect would cost him not alone
 Man's favourable judgment, but his own ;
 His birthright shaken, and no longer clear,
 Than while his conduct proves his heart sincere.
 Retort the charge, and let the world be told
 She boasts a confidence she does not hold ;
 That, conscious of her crimes, she feels instead
 A cold misgiving, and a killing dread : 770
 That while in health the ground of her support
 Is madly to forget that life is short ;
 That sick she trembles, knowing she must die,
 Her hope presumption, and her faith a lie ;
 That while she dotes, and dreams that she believes,
 She mocks her Maker, and herself deceives,
 Her utmost reach, historical assent,
 The doctrines warped to what they never meant ;
 That truth itself is in her head as dull
 And useless as a candle in a skull, 780
 And all her love of God a groundless claim,
 A trick upon the canvas, painted flame.
 Tell her again, the sneer upon her face,
 And all her censures of the work of grace,
 Are insincere, meant only to conceal
 A dread she would not, yet is forced to feel ;
 That in her heart the Christian she reveres,
 And, while she seems to scorn him, only fears.
 A poet does not work by square or line,
 As smiths and joiners perfect a design ; 790
 At least we moderns, our attention less,
 Beyond the example of our sires digress,

And claim a right to scamper and run wide,
 Wherever chance, caprice, or fancy guide.
 The world and I fortuitously met ;
 I owed a trifle and have paid the debt ;
 She did me wrong, I recompensed the deed.
 And, having struck the balance, now proceed.
 Perhaps however, as some years have passed
 Since she and I conversed together last, 800
 And I have lived recluse in rural shades,
 Which seldom a distinct report pervades,
 Great changes and new manners have occurred,
 And blest reforms, that I have never heard,
 And she may now be as discreet and wise
 As once absurd in all discerning eyes.
 Sobriety perhaps may now be found
 Where once intoxication pressed the ground ;
 The subtle and injurious may be just,
 And he grown chaste that was the slave of lust ; 810
 Arts once esteemed may be with shame dismissed,
 Charity may relax the miser's fist,
 The gamester may have cast his cards away,
 Forgot to curse, and only kneel to pray.
 It has indeed been told me (with what weight,
 How credibly, 'tis hard for me to state)
 That fables old, that seemed for ever mute,
 Revived are hastening into fresh repute,
 And god and goddesses discarded long
 Like useless lumber, or a stroller's song, 820
 Are bringing into vogue their heathen train,
 And Jupiter bids fair to rule again ;
 That certain feasts are instituted now,
 Where Venus hears the lover's tender vow ;
 That all Olympus through the country roves,
 To consecrate our few remaining groves,
 And echo learns politely to repeat
 The praise of names for ages obsolete ;
 That having proved the weakness, it should seem,
 Of Revelation's ineffectual beam 830
 To bring the passions under sober sway,
 And give the moral springs their proper play,
 They mean to try what may at last be done
 By stout substantial gods of wood and stone,
 And whether Roman rites may not produce
 The virtues of old Rome for English use.
 May much success attend the pious plan,
 May Mercury once more embellish man,
 Grace him again with long forgotten arts,

Reclaim his taste, and brighten up his parts, 840
Make him athletic as in days of old,
Learned at the bar, in the palæstra bold,
Divest the rougher sex of female airs,
And teach the softer not to copy theirs :
The change shall please, nor shall it matter aught
Who works the wonder, if it be but wrought.
'Tis time, however, if the case stand thus,
For us plain folks, and all who side with us,
To build our altar, confident and bold,
And say as stern Elijah said of old, 850
" The strife now stands upon a fair award,
If Israel's Lord be God, then serve the Lord :
If He be silent, faith is all a whim ;
Then Baal is the God, and worship him."
Digression is so much in modern use,
Thought is so rare, and fancy so profuse,
Some never seem so wide of their intent
As when returning to the theme they meant ;
As mendicants, whose business is to roam,
Make every parish but their own their home. 860
Though such continual zigzags in a book,
Such drunken reelings, have an awkward look,
And I had rather creep to what is true
Than rove and stagger with no mark in view ;
Yet to consult a little, seemed no crime,
The freakish humour of the present time :
But now, to gather up what seems dispersed,
And touch the subject I designed at first,
May prove, though much beside the rules of art,
Best for the public, and my wisest part. 870
And first, let no man charge me, that I mean
To clothe in sables every social scene,
And give good company a face severe,
As if they met around a father's bier ;
For tell some men that pleasure all their bent,
And laughter all their work, is life misspent,
Their wisdom bursts into this sage reply,
" Then mirth is sin, and we should always cry."
To find the medium asks some share of wit,
And therefore 'tis a mark fools never hit. 880
But, though life's valley be a vale of tears,
A brighter scene beyond that vale appears,
Whose glory, with a light that never fades,
Shoots between scattered rocks and opening shades,
And, while it shows the land the soul desires,
The language of the land she seeks inspires.

Thus touched, the tongue receives a sacred cure
 Of all that was absurd, profane, impure ;
 Held within modest bounds, the tide of speech
 Pursues the course that truth and nature teach, 890
 No longer labours merely to produce
 The pomp of sound, or tinkle without use :
 Where'er it winds, the salutary stream,
 Sprightly and fresh, enriches every theme,
 While all the happy man possessed before,
 The gift of nature, or the classic store,
 Is made subservient to the grand design
 For which Heaven formed the faculty divine.
 So, should an idiot, while at large he strays,
 Find the sweet lyre on which an artist plays, 900
 With rash and awkward force the chords he shakes,
 And grins with wonder at the jar he makes ;
 But let the wise and well-instructed hand
 Once take the shell beneath his just command,
 In gentle sounds it seems as it complained
 Of the rude injuries it late sustained,
 Till, tuned at length to some immortal song,
 It sounds Jehovah's name, and pours his praise along.

RETIREMENT.

. studiis florens ignobilis oti.
 VIRG. *Georg.* lib. iv.

HACKNEYED in business, wearied at that oar
 Which thousands, once fast chained to, quit no more,
 But which, when life at ebb runs weak and low,
 All wish, or seem to wish, they could forgo ;
 The statesman, lawyer, merchant, man of trade,
 Pants for the refuge of some rural shade,
 Where, all his long anxieties forgot
 Amid the charms of a sequestered spot,
 Or recollected only to gild o'er
 And add a smile to what was sweet before, 10
 He may possess the joys he thinks he sees,
 Lay his old age upon the lap of Ease.
 Improve the remnant of his wasted span,
 And having lived a trifler, die a man.
 Thus conscience pleads her cause within the breast,
 Though long rebelled against, not yet suppressed,
 And calls a creature formed for God alone,

LADY AUSTEN

FROM AN ENGRAVING BY H. ROBINSON AFTER A DRAWING BY W. HARVEY OF THE ORIGINAL
BY GEORGE ROBINSON

100

For heaven's high purposes, and not his own,
 Calls him away from selfish ends and aims,
 From what debilitates and what inflames, 20
 From cities humming with a restless crowd,
 Sordid as active, ignorant as loud,
 Whose highest praise is that they live in vain,
 The dupes of pleasure, or the slaves of gain,
 Where works of man are clustered close around,
 And works of God are hardly to be found,
 To regions where, in spite of sin and woe,
 Traces of Eden are still seen below,
 Where mountain, river, forest, field and grove,
 Remind him of his Maker's power and love. 30
 'Tis well if, looked for at so late a day,
 In the last scene of such a senseless play,
 True wisdom will attend his feeble call,
 And grace his action ere the curtain fall.
 Souls that have long despised their heavenly birth,
 Their wishes all impregnated with earth,
 For threescore years employed with ceaseless care
 In catching smoke and feeding upon air,
 Conversant only with the ways of men,
 Rarely redeem the short remaining ten. 40
 Inveterate habits choke the unfruitful heart,
 Their fibres penetrate its tenderest part,
 And, draining its nutritious powers to feed
 Their noxious growth, starve every better seed.
 Happy, if full of days—but happier far,
 If, ere we yet discern life's evening star,
 Sick of the service of a world that feeds
 Its patient drudges with dry chaff and weeds,
 We can escape from custom's idiot sway,
 To serve the Sovereign we were born to obey. 50
 Then sweet to muse upon his skill displayed
 (Infinite skill) in all that He has made !
 To trace in nature's most minute design
 The signature and stamp of power divine,
 Contrivance intricate, expressed with ease,
 Where unassisted sight no beauty sees,
 The shapely limb and lubricated joint,
 Within the small dimensions of a point,
 Muscle and nerve miraculously spun,
 His mighty work who speaks and it is done, 60
 The Invisible in things scarce seen revealed,
 To whom an atom is an ample field ;
 To wonder at a thousand insect forms,
 These hatched, and those resuscitated worms,

New life ordained and brighter scenes to share,
 Once prone on earth, now buoyant upon air,
 Whose shape would make them, had they bulk and size,
 More hideous foes than fancy can devise;
 With helmed heads and dragon scales adorned,
 The mighty myriads, now securely scorned, 70
 Would mock the majesty of man's high birth,
 Despise his bulwarks, and unpeople earth.
 Then with a glance of fancy to survey,
 Far as the faculty can stretch away,
 Ten thousand rivers poured at his command
 From urns, that never fail, through every land;
 These like a deluge with impetuous force,
 Those winding modestly a silent course;
 The cloud-surmounting Alps, the fruitful vales;
 Seas, on which every nation spreads her sails; 80
 The sun, a world whence other worlds drink light,
 The crescent moon, the diadem of night;
 Stars countless, each in his appointed place,
 Fast anchored in the deep abyss of space—
 At such a sight to catch the poet's flame,
 And with a rapture like his own exclaim,
 \ "These are thy glorious works, thou Source of good,
 How dimly seen, how faintly understood!
 Thine, and upheld by thy paternal care,
 This universal frame, thus wondrous fair; 90
 Thy power divine, and bounty beyond thought,
 Adored and praised in all that thou hast wrought.
 Absorbed in that immensity I see,
 I shrink abased, and yet aspire to thee;
 Instruct me, guide me to that heavenly day
 Thy words, more clearly than thy works, display,
 That, while thy truths my grosser thoughts refine,
 I may resemble thee, and call thee mine."
 O blest proficiency; surpassing all
 That men erroneously their glory call, 100
 The recompense that arts or arms can yield,
 The bar, the senate, or the tented field.
 Compared with this sublimest life below,
 Ye kings and rulers, what have courts to show?
 Thus studied, used and consecrated thus,
 Whatever is seems formed indeed for us:
 Not as the plaything of a froward child
 Fretful unless diverted and beguiled,
 Much less to feed and fan the fatal fires
 Of pride, ambition, or impure desires, 110
 But as a scale, by which the soul ascends

From mighty means to more important ends,
Securely, though by steps but rarely trod,
Mounts from inferior beings up to God, /
And sees, by no fallacious light or dim,
Earth made for man, and man himself for Him. /

Not that I mean to approve, or would enforce,
A superstitious and monastic course :
Truth is not local, God alike pervades
And fills the world of traffic and the shades, 120
And may be feared amid the busiest scenes,
Or scorned where business never intervenes.
But 'tis not easy with a mind like ours,
Conscious of weakness in its noblest powers,
And in a world where, other ills apart,
The roving eye misleads the careless heart,
To limit thought, by nature prone to stray
Wherever freakish fancy points the way ;
To bid the pleadings of self-love be still,
Resign our own, and seek our Maker's will ; 130
To spread the page of Scripture, and compare
Our conduct with the laws engraven there ;
To measure all that passes in the breast,
Faithfully, fairly, by that sacred test ;
To dive into the secret deeps within,
To spare no passion and no favourite sin,
And search the themes important above all,
Ourselves, and our recovery from our fall.
But leisure, silence, and a mind released
From anxious thoughts how wealth may be increased, 140
How to secure, in some propitious hour,
The point of interest or the post of power,
A soul serene, and equally retired
From objects too much dreaded or desired,
Safe from the clamours of perverse dispute,
At least are friendly to the great pursuit.

Opening the map of God's extensive plan, /
We find a little isle, this life of man ;
Eternity's unknown expanse appears
Circling around and limiting his years. 150
The busy race examine and explore
Each creek and cavern of the dangerous shore,
With care collect what in their eyes excels,
Some shining pebbles, and some weeds and shells ;
Thus laden, dream that they are rich and great,
And happiest he that groans beneath his weight :
The waves o'ertake them in their serious play,
And every hour sweeps multitudes away ;

They shriek and sink, survivors start and weep,
 Pursue their sport, and follow to the deep, 160
 A few forsake the throng ; with lifted eyes
 Ask wealth of Heaven, and gain a real prize,
 Truth, wisdom, grace, and peace like that above,
 Sealed with His signet whom they serve and love ;
 Scorned by the rest, with patient hope they wait
 A kind release from their imperfect state,
 And unregretted are soon snatched away
 From scenes of sorrow into glorious day.

Nor these alone prefer a life recluse,
 Who seek retirement for its proper use ; 170
 The love of change that lives in every breast,
 Genius, and temper, and desire of rest,
 Discordant motives in one centre meet,
 And each inclines its votary to retreat.
 Some minds by nature are averse to noise
 And hate the tumult half the world enjoys,
 The lure of avarice, or the pompous prize,
 That courts display before ambitious eyes ;
 The fruits that hang on pleasure's flowery stem,
 Whate'er enchants them, are no snares to them. 180
 To them the deep recess of dusky groves,
 Or forest where the deer securely roves,
 The fall of waters and the song of birds,
 And hills that echo to the distant herds,
 Are luxuries excelling all the glare
 The world can boast, and her chief favourites share.
 With eager step, and carelessly arrayed,
 For such a cause the poet seeks the shade :
 From all he sees he catches new delight,
 Pleased fancy claps her pinions at the sight ; 190
 The rising or the setting orb of day,
 The clouds that flit, or slowly float away,
 Nature in all the various shapes she wears,
 Frowning in storms, or breathing gentle airs,
 The snowy robe her wintry state assumes,
 Her summer heats, her fruits, and her perfumes,
 All, all alike, transport the glowing bard,
 Success in rhyme his glory and reward.
 O Nature ! whose Elysian scenes disclose
 His bright perfections, at whose word they rose, 200
 Next to that Power, who formed thee and sustains,
 Be thou the great inspirer of my strains,
 Still, as I touch the lyre, do thou expand
 Thy genuine charms, and guide an artless hand,
 That I may catch a fire but rarely known,

Give useful light, though I should miss renown,
 And, poring on thy page, whose every line
 Bears proof of an intelligence divine,
 May feel a heart enriched by what it pays,
 That builds its glory on its Maker's praise. 210
 Woe to the man whose wit disclaims its use,
 Glittering in vain, or only to seduce,
 Who studies nature with a wanton eye,
 Admires the work, but slips the lesson by ;
 His hours of leisure and recess employs
 In drawing pictures of forbidden joys,
 Retires to blazon his own worthless name,
 Or shoot the careless with a surer aim.

The lover too shuns business and alarms,
 Tender idolater of absent charms. 220
 Saints offer nothing in their warmest prayers
 That he devotes not with a zeal like theirs ;
 'Tis consecration of his heart, soul, time,
 And every thought that wanders is a crime.
 In sighs he worships his supremely fair,
 And weeps a sad libation in despair,
 Adores a creature, and, devout in vain,
 Wins in return an answer of disdain.

As woodbine weds the plants within her reach,
 Rough elm, or smooth-grained ash, or glossy beech, 230
 In spiral rings ascends the trunk, and lays
 Her golden tassels on the leafy sprays,
 But does a mischief while she lends a grace,
 Straitening its growth by such a strict embrace ;
 So love, that clings around the noblest minds,
 Forbids the advancement of the soul he binds ;
 The suitor's air indeed he soon improves,
 And forms it to the taste of her he loves,
 Teaches his eyes a language, and no less
 Refines his speech, and fashions his address ; 240
 But farewell promises of happier fruits,
 Manly designs, and learning's grave pursuits ;
 Girt with a chain he cannot wish to break,
 His only bliss is sorrow for her sake.

Who will may pant for glory and excel,
 Her smile his aim, all higher aims farewell !
 Thyrsis, Alexis, or whatever name
 May least offend against so pure a flame,
 Though sage advice of friends the most sincere
 Sound harshly in so delicate an ear, 250
 And lovers, of all creatures, tame or wild,
 Can least brook management, however mild,

Yet let a poet (poetry disarms
 The fiercest animals with magic charms)
 Risk an intrusion on thy pensive mood,
 And woo and win thee to thy proper good.
 Pastoral images and still retreats,
 Umbrageous walks and solitary seats,
 Sweet birds in concert with harmonious streams,
 Soft airs, nocturnal vigils, and day dreams, 260
 Are all enchantments in a case like thine,
 Conspire against thy peace with one design,
 Soothe thee to make thee but a surer prey,
 And feed the fire that wastes thy powers away.
 Up! God has formed thee with a wiser view,
 Not to be led in chains, but to subdue;
 Calls thee to cope with enemies, and first
 Points out a conflict with thyself, the worst.
 Woman indeed, a gift he would bestow
 When he designed a paradise below, 270
 The richest earthly boon his hands afford,
 Deserves to be beloved, but not adored.
 Post away swiftly to more active scenes,
 Collect the scattered truths that study gleans,
 Mix with the world, but with its wiser part,
 No longer give an image all thine heart;
 Its empire is not hers, nor is it thine,
 'Tis God's just claim, prerogative divine.
 Virtuous and faithful HEBERDEN, whose skill
 Attempts no task it cannot well fulfil, 280
 Gives melancholy up to nature's care,
 And sends the patient into purer air.
 Look where he comes—in this embowered alcove,
 Stand close concealed, and see a statue move:
 Lips busy, and eyes fixed, foot falling slow,
 Arms hanging idly down, hands clasped below,
 Interpret to the marking eye distress,
 Such as its symptoms can alone express.
 That tongue is silent now; that silent tongue
 Could argue once, could jest or join the song, 290
 Could give advice, could censure or commend,
 Or charm the sorrows of a drooping friend.
 Renounced alike its office and its sport,
 Its brisker and its graver strains fall short;
 Both fail beneath a fever's secret sway,
 And like a summer brook are past away.
 This is a sight for Pity to peruse,
 Till she resemble faintly what she views,
 Till Sympathy contract a kindred pain,

Pierced with the woes that she laments in vain. 300
 This, of all maladies that man infest,
 Claims most compassion, and receives the least :
 Job felt it, when he groaned beneath the rod
 And the barbed arrows of a frowning God ;
 And such emollients as his friends could spare
 Friends such as his for modern Jobs prepare.
 Blest, rather curst, with hearts that never feel,
 Kept snug in caskets of close hammered steel,
 With mouths made only to grin wide and eat,
 And minds that deem derided pain a treat ; 310
 With limbs of British oak, and nerves of wire,
 And wit the puppet-prompters might inspire,
 Their sovereign nostrum is a clumsy joke
 On pangs enforced with God's severest stroke.
 But, with a soul that ever felt the sting
 Of sorrow, sorrow is a sacred thing :
 Not to molest, or irritate, or raise
 A laugh at its expense, is slender praise ;
 He, that has not usurped the name of man,
 Does all, and deems too little all, he can 320
 To assuage the throbbings of the festered part,
 And stanch the bleedings of a broken heart.
 'Tis not, as heads that never ache suppose,
 Forgery of fancy, and a dream of woes ;
 Man is a harp whose chords elude the sight, /
 Each yielding harmony, disposed aright ;
 The screws reversed (a task which if He please
 God in a moment executes with ease)
 Ten thousand thousand strings at once go loose,
 Lost, till He tune them, all their power and use. 330
 Then neither heathy wilds, nor scenes as fair
 As ever recompensed the peasant's care,
 Nor soft declivities with tufted hills,
 Nor view of waters turning busy mills,
 Parks in which Art preceptress Nature weds,
 Nor gardens interspersed with flowery beds,
 Nor gales, that catch the scent of blooming groves,
 And waft it to the mourner as he roves,
 Can call up life into his faded eye
 That passes all he sees unheeded by : 340
 No wounds like those a wounded spirit feels ; /
 No cure for such, till God, who makes them, heals.
 And thou, sad sufferer under nameless ill,
 That yields not to the touch of human skill,
 Improve the kind occasion, understand
 A Father's frown, and kiss his chastening hand.

To thee the day-spring, and the blaze of noon,
 The purple evening and resplendent moon,
 The stars, that, sprinkled o'er the vault of night,
 Seem drops descending in a shower of light, 350
 Shine not, or undesired and hated shine,
 Seen through the medium of a cloud like thine :
 Yet seek Him, in his favour life is found ;
 All bliss beside, a shadow or a sound :
 Then Heaven, eclipsed so long, and this dull Earth,
 Shall seem to start into a second birth ;
 Nature, assuming a more lovely face,
 Borrowing a beauty from the works of grace,
 Shall be despised and overlooked no more,
 Shall fill thee with delights unfelt before, 360
 Impart to things inanimate a voice,
 And bid her mountains and her hills rejoice ;
 The sound shall run along the winding vales,
 And thou enjoy an Eden ere it fails.

"Ye groves," the statesman at his desk exclaims.
 Sick of a thousand disappointed aims,
 "My patrimonial treasure and my pride,
 Beneath your shades your grey possessor hide,
 Receive me languishing for that repose
 The servant of the public never knows. 370
 Ye saw me once (ah those regretted days,
 When boyish innocence was all my praise !)
 Hour after hour delightfully allot
 To studies then familiar, since forgot,
 And cultivate a taste for ancient song,
 Catching its ardour as I mused along ;
 Nor seldom, as propitious heaven might send,
 What once I valued and could boast, a friend,
 Were witnesses how cordially I pressed
 His undissembling virtue to my breast ; 380
 Receive me now, not uncorrupt as then,
 Nor guiltless of corrupting other men,
 But versed in arts, that, while they seem to stay
 A falling empire, hasten its decay.
 To the fair haven of my native home,
 The wreck of what I was, fatigued I come ;
 For once I can approve the patriot's voice,
 And make the course he recommends my choice :
 We meet at last in one sincere desire,
 His wish and mine both prompt me to retire." 390
 'Tis done—he steps into the welcome chaise,
 Lolls at his ease behind four handsome bays,
 That whirl away from business and debate

The disencumbered Atlas of the state.
Ask not the boy, who, when the breeze of morn
First shakes the glittering drops from every thorn,
Unfolds his flock, then under bank or bush
Sits linking cherry-stones, or platting rush,
How fair is freedom?—he was always free :
To carve his rustic name upon a tree, 400
To snare the mole, or with ill-fashioned hook
To draw the incautious minnow from the brook,
Are life's prime pleasures in his simple view,
His flock the chief concern he ever knew ;
She shines but little in his heedless eyes,
The good we never miss we rarely prize.
But ask the noble drudge in state affairs,
Escaped from office and its constant cares,
What charms he sees in freedom's smile expressed,
In freedom lost so long, now repossessed ; 410
The tongue, whose strains were cogent as commands,
Revered at home, and felt in foreign lands,
Shall own itself a stammerer in that cause,
Or plead its silence as its best applause.
He knows indeed that, whether dressed or rude,
Wild without art, or artfully subdued,
Nature in every form inspires delight,
But never marked her with so just a sight.
Her hedge-row shrubs, a variegated store,
With woodbine and wild roses mantled o'er, 420
Green balks and furrowed lands, the stream that spreads
Its cooling vapour o'er the dewy meads,
Downs, that almost escape the inquiring eye,
That melt and fade into the distant sky,
Beauties he lately slighted as he passed,
Seem all created since he travelled last.
Master of all the enjoyments he designed,
No rough annoyance rankling in his mind,
What early philosophic hours he keeps,
How regular his meals, how sound he sleeps ! 430
Not sounder he that on the mainmast head,
While morning kindles with a windy red,
Begins a long look-out for distant land,
Nor quits till evening-watch his giddy stand,
Then swift descending with a seaman's haste,
Slips to his hammock, and forgets the blast.
He chooses company, but not the squire's,
Whose wit is rudeness, whose good breeding tires ;
Nor yet the parson's, who would gladly come,
Obsequious when abroad, though proud at home ; 440

Nor can he much affect the neighbouring peer,
 Whose toe of emulation treads too near;
 But wisely seeks a more convenient friend,
 With whom, dismissing forms, he may unbend :
 A man whom marks of condescending grace
 Teach, while they flatter him, his proper place :
 Who comes when called, and at a word withdraws,
 Speaks with reserve, and listens with applause ;
 Some plain mechanic, who, without pretence
 To birth or wit, nor gives nor takes offence,
 On whom he rests well pleased his weary powers,
 And talks and laughs away his vacant hours.

450

The tide of life, swift always in its course,
 May run in cities with a brisker force,
 But nowhere with a current so serene,
 Or half so clear, as in the rural scene.
 Yet how fallacious is all earthly bliss,
 What obvious truths the wisest heads may miss ;
 Some pleasures live a month, and some a year,
 But short the date of all we gather here ;
 Nor happiness is felt, except the true,
 That does not charm the more for being new.
 This observation, as it chanced, not made,
 Or, if the thought occurred, not duly weighed,
 He sighs—for, after all, by slow degrees
 The spot he loved has lost the power to please ;
 To cross his ambling pony day by day
 Seems at the best but dreaming life away ;
 The prospect, such as might enchant despair,
 He views it not, or sees no beauty there ;
 With aching heart, and discontented looks,
 Returns at noon to billiards or to books,
 But feels, while grasping at his faded joys,
 A secret thirst of his renounced employs.
 He chides the tardiness of every post,
 Pants to be told of battles won or lost,
 Blames his own indolence, observes, though late,
 'Tis criminal to leave a sinking state,
 Flies to the levee, and, received with grace,
 Kneels, kisses hands, and shines again in place.

460

470

480

Suburban villas, highway-side retreats,
 That dread the encroachment of our growing streets,
 Tight boxes, neatly sashed, and in a blaze
 With all a July sun's collected rays,
 Delight the citizen, who, gasping there,
 Breathes clouds of dust, and calls it country air.
 O sweet retirement, who would balk the thought,

That could afford retirement, or could not ?
 'Tis such an easy walk, so smooth and straight,
 The second milestone fronts the garden gate ;
 A step if fair, and, if a shower approach,
 You find safe shelter in the next stage-coach.
 There prisoned in a parlour snug and small,
 Like bottled wasps upon a southern wall,
 The man of business and his friends compressed
 Forget their labours, and yet find no rest ;
 But still 'tis rural—trees are to be seen
 From every window, and the fields are green,
 Ducks paddle in the pond before the door, ;
 And what could a remoter scene show more ?
 A sense of elegance we rarely find
 The portion of a mean or vulgar mind,
 And ignorance of better things makes man,
 Who cannot much, rejoice in what he can ;
 And he that deems his leisure well bestowed
 In contemplation of a turnpike road
 Is occupied as well, employs his hours
 As wisely, and as much improves his powers,
 As he that slumbers in pavilions graced
 With all the charms of an accomplished taste.
 Yet hence, alas ! insolvencies ; and hence
 The unpitied victim of ill-judged expense,
 From all his wearisome engagements freed,
 Shakes hands with business, and retires indeed.

490

500

510

Your prudent grandmamas, ye modern belles,
 Content with Bristol, Bath, and Tunbridge Wells,
 When health required it would consent to roam,
 Else more attached to pleasures found at home.
 But now alike, gay widow, virgin, wife,
 Ingenious to diversify dull life,
 In coaches, chaises, caravans, and hoys,
 Fly to the coast for daily, nightly joys,
 And all, impatient of dry land, agree
 With one consent to rush into the sea.
 Ocean exhibits, fathomless and broad,
 Much of the power and majesty of God,
 He swathes about the swelling of the deep,
 That shines and rests, as infants smile and sleep ;
 Vast as it is, it answers as it flows
 The breathings of the lightest air that blows ;
 Curling and whitening over all the waste,
 The rising waves obey the increasing blast,
 Abrupt and horrid as the tempest roars,
 Thunder and flash upon the steadfast shores,

520

530

Till He that rides the whirlwind checks the rein ;
 Then all the world of waters sleeps again.—
 Nereids or Dryads, as the fashion leads,
 Now in the floods, now panting in the meads,
 Votaries of pleasure still, where'er she dwells,
 Near barren rocks, in palaces, or cells, 540
 O grant a poet leave to recommend
 (A poet fond of nature, and your friend)
 Her slighted works to your admiring view,
 Her works must needs excel who fashioned you.
 Would ye, when rambling in your morning ride,
 With some unmeaning coxcomb at your side,
 Condemn the prattler for his idle pains
 To waste unheard the music of his strains,
 And, deaf to all the impertinence of tongue,
 That, while it courts, affronts and does you wrong, 550
 Mark well the finished plan without a fault,
 The seas globose and huge, the o'erarching vault,
 Earth's millions daily fed, a world employed
 In gathering plenty yet to be enjoyed,
 Till gratitude grew vocal in the praise
 Of God, beneficent in all His ways ;
 Graced with such wisdom, how would beauty shine !
 Ye want but that to seem indeed divine.

Anticipated rents and bills unpaid —
 Force many a shining youth into the shade, 560
 Not to redeem his time but his estate,
 And play the fool, but at a cheaper rate :
 There, hid in loathed obscurity, removed
 From pleasures left, but never more beloved,
 He just endures, and with a sickly spleen
 Sighs o'er the beauties of the charming scene.
 Nature indeed looks prettily in rhyme ;
 Streams tinkle sweetly in poetic chime :
 The warblings of the blackbird, clear and strong,
 Are musical enough in Thomson's song ; 570
 And Cobham's groves, and Windsor's green retreats,
 When Pope describes them, have a thousand sweets ;
 He likes the country, but in truth must own,
 Most likes it when he studies it in town.

Poor Jack—no matter who—for when I blame,
 I pity, and must therefore sink the name—
 Lived in his saddle, loved the chase, the course,
 And always, ere he mounted, kissed his horse.
 The estate his sires had owned in ancient years
 Was quickly distanced, matched against a peer's. 580
 Jack vanished, was regretted and forgot ;

'Tis wild good-nature's never-failing lot.
 At length, when all had long supposed him dead,
 By cold submersion, razor, rope, or lead,
 My lord, alighting at his usual place,
 The Crown, took notice of an ostler's face.
 Jack knew his friend, but hoped in that disguise
 He might escape the most observing eyes,
 And whistling, as if unconcerned and gay,
 Curried his nag and looked another way. 590
 Convinced at last, upon a nearer view,
 'Twas he, the same, the very Jack he knew,
 O'erwhelmed at once with wonder, grief, and joy,
 He pressed him much to quit his base employ;
 His countenance, his purse, his heart, his hand,
 Influence and power, were all at his command.
 Peers are not always generous as well-bred,
 But Granby was, meant truly what he said.
 Jack bowed, and was obliged—confessed 'twas strange,
 That so retired he should not wish a change, 600
 But knew no medium between guzzling beer
 And his old stint—three thousand pounds a year.

Thus some retire to nourish hopeless woe; —
 Some seeking happiness not found below;
 Some to comply with humour, and a mind
 To social scenes by nature disinclined;
 Some swayed by fashion, some by deep disgust;
 Some self-impooverished and because they must;
 But few that court Retirement are aware
 Of half the toils they must encounter there. 610

Lucrative offices are seldom lost
 For want of powers proportioned to the post:
 Give even a dunce the employment he desires,
 And he soon finds the talents it requires;
 A business with an income at its heels
 Furnishes always oil for its own wheels.
 But in his arduous enterprise to close
 His active years with indolent repose
 He finds the labours of that state exceed
 His utmost faculties, severe indeed. 620
 'Tis easy to resign a toilsome place,
 But not to manage leisure with a grace; /
 Absence of occupation is not rest,
 A mind quite vacant is a mind distressed.
 The veteran steed, excused his task at length,
 In kind compassion of his failing strength,
 And turned into the park or mead to graze,
 Exempt from future service all his days,

There feels a pleasure perfect in its kind,
 Ranges at liberty, and snuffs the wind. 630
 But when his lord would quit the busy road,
 To taste a joy like that he has bestowed,
 He proves, less happy than his favoured brute,
 A life of ease a difficult pursuit.
 Thought, to the man that never thinks, may seem
 As natural as when asleep to dream ;
 But reveries (for human minds will act)
 Specious in show, impossible in fact,
 Those flimsy webs that break as soon as wrought
 Attain not to the dignity of thought : 640
 Nor yet the swarms that occupy the brain,
 Where dreams of dress, intrigue, and pleasure reign ;
 Nor such as useless conversation breeds,
 Or lust engenders, and indulgence feeds.
 Whence and what are we ? to what end ordained ?
 What means the drama by the world sustained ?
 Business or vain amusement, care, or mirth,
 Divide the frail inhabitants of earth.
 Is duty a mere sport, or an employ ?
 Life an intrusted talent, or a toy ? 650
 Is there, as reason, conscience, scripture, say,
 Cause to provide for a great future day,
 When, earth's assigned duration at an end,
 Man shall be summoned, and the dead attend ?
 The trumpet—will it sound ? the curtain rise ?
 And show the august tribunal of the skies,
 Where no prevarication shall avail,
 Where eloquence and artifice shall fail,
 The pride of arrogant distinctions fall,
 And conscience and our conduct judge us all ? 660
 Pardon me, ye that give the midnight oil
 To learned cares or philosophic toil,
 Though I revere your honourable names,
 Your useful labours and important aims,
 And hold the world indebted to your aid,
 Enriched with the discoveries ye have made ;
 Yet let me stand excused, if I esteem
 A mind employed on so sublime a theme,
 Pushing her bold inquiry to the date
 And outline of the present transient state, 670
 And, after poisoning her adventurous wings,
 Settling at last upon eternal things,
 Far more intelligent, and better taught
 The strenuous use of profitable thought,
 Than ye, when happiest, and enlightened most,

And highest in renown, can justly boast.

A mind unnerved, or indisposed to bear
The weight of subjects worthiest of her care,
Whatever hopes a change of scene inspires,
Must change her nature, or in vain retires. 680

An idler is a watch that wants both hands,
As useless if it goes as when it stands.
Books therefore, not the scandal of the shelves
In which lewd sensualists print out themselves;
Nor those in which the stage gives vice a blow,
With what success let modern manners show;
Nor his who, for the bane of thousands born,
Built God a church, and laughed his word to scorn,
Skilful alike to seem devout and just,
And stab religion with a sly side-thrust; 690

Nor those of learned philologists, who chase
A panting syllable through time and space,
Start it at home, and hunt it in the dark,
To Gaul, to Greece, and into Noah's ark;
But such as learning without false pretence,
The friend of truth, the associate of sound sense,
And such as, in the zeal of good design,
Strong judgment labouring in the scripture mine,
All such as manly and great souls produce,
Worthy to live, and of eternal use; 700

Behold in these what leisure hours demand,
Amusement and true knowledge hand in hand.
Luxury gives the mind a childish cast,
And, while she polishes, perverts the taste;
Habits of close attention, thinking heads,
Become more rare as dissipation spreads,
Till authors hear at length one general cry,
Tickle and entertain us, or we die.

The loud demand, from year to year the same,
Beggars invention, and makes fancy lame; 710
Till farce itself, most mournfully *jejune*,
Calls for the kind assistance of a tune,
And novels (witness every month's review)
Bely their name, and offer nothing new.

The mind relaxing into needful sport
Should turn to writers of an abler sort
Whose wit well managed, and whose classic style,
Give truth a lustre, and make wisdom smile.

Friends, (for I cannot stint, as some have done,
Too rigid in my view, that name to one; 720
Though one, I grant it, in the generous breast,
Will stand advanced a step above the rest:

Flowers by that name promiscuously we call,
 But one, the rose, the regent of them all)—
 Friends, not adopted with a schoolboy's haste,
 But chosen with a nice discerning taste,
 Well born, well disciplined, who, placed apart
 From vulgar minds, have honour much at heart,
 And, though the world may think the ingredients odd,
 The love of virtue, and the fear of God ! 730
 Such friends prevent, what else would soon succeed,
 A temper rustic as the life we lead,
 And keep the polish of the manners clean
 As theirs who bustle in the busiest scene ;
 For solitude, however some may rave,
 Seeming a sanctuary, proves a grave,
 A sepulchre, in which the living lie,
 Where all good qualities grow sick and die.
 I praise the Frenchman,* his remark was shrewd—
 "How sweet, how passing sweet, is solitude ! 740
 But grant me still a friend in my retreat,
 Whom I may whisper, solitude is sweet,"
 Yet neither these delights, nor aught beside
 That appetite can ask or wealth provide,
 Can save us always from a tedious day,
 Or shine the dulness of still life away ;
 Divine communion, carefully enjoyed, —
 Or sought with energy, must fill the void.
 O sacred art, to which alone life owes
 Its happiest seasons, and a peaceful close, 750
 Scorned in a world indebted to that scorn
 For evils daily felt and hardly borne,—
 Not knowing thee, we reap with bleeding hands
 Flowers of rank odour upon thorny lands,
 And, while experience cautions us in vain,
 Grasp seeming happiness, and find it pain.
 Despondence, self-deserted in her grief,
 Lost by abandoning her own relief ;
 Murmuring and ungrateful discontent
 That scorns afflictions mercifully meant, 760
 Those humours tart as wines upon the fret
 Which idleness and weariness beget ;
 These and a thousand plagues that haunt the breast
 Fond of the phantom of an earthly rest,
 Divine communion chases, as the day
 Drives to their dens the obedient beasts of prey.
 See Judah's promised king, bereft of all,
 Driven out an exile from the face of Saul.

* Bruyère.

To distant caves the lonely wanderer flies,
 To seek that peace a tyrant's frown denies.
 Hear the sweet accents of his tuneful voice,
 Hear him, o'erwhelmed with sorrow, yet rejoice.
 No womanish or wailing grief has part,
 No, not a moment, in his royal heart ;
 'Tis manly music, such as martyrs make,
 Suffering with gladness for a Saviour's sake :
 His soul exults, hope animates his lays,
 The sense of mercy kindles into praise,
 And wilds, familiar with the lion's roar,
 Ring with ecstatic sounds unheard before :
 'Tis love like his that can alone defeat
 The foes of man, or make a desert sweet.

770

780

Religion does not censure or exclude
 Unnumbered pleasures harmlessly pursued ;
 To study culture, and with artful toil
 To meliorate and tame the stubborn soil ;
 To give dissimilar yet fruitful lands
 The grain, or herb, or plant, that each demands ;
 To cherish virtue in an humble state,
 And share the joys your bounty may create ;
 To mark the matchless workings of the power
 That shuts within its seed the future flower,
 Bids these in elegance of form excel,
 In colour these, and those delight the smell,
 Sends Nature forth, the daughter of the skies,
 To dance on earth, and charm all human eyes ;
 To teach the canvas innocent deceit,
 Or lay the landscape on the snowy sheet—
 These, these are arts pursued without a crime,
 That leave no stain upon the wing of Time.

790

800

Me poetry (or rather notes that aim
 Feebly and faintly at poetic fame)
 Employs, shut out from more important views,
 Fast by the banks of the slow-winding Ouse ;
 Content if thus sequestered I may raise
 A monitor's, though not a poet's, praise,
 And while I teach an art too little known,
 To close life wisely, may not waste my own.

THE DOVES

REASONING at every step he treads,
Man yet mistakes his way,
While meaner things, whom instinct leads,
Are rarely known to stray.

One silent eve I wandered late,
And heard the voice of love ;
The turtle thus addressed her mate,
And soothed the listening dove :

“ Our mutual bond of faith and truth
No time shall disengage,
Those blessings of our early youth
Shall cheer our latest age ;

“ While innocence without disguise,
And constancy sincere,
Shall fill the circles of those eyes,
And mine can read them there ;

“ Those ills, that wait on all below,
Shall ne’er be felt by me,
Or gently felt, and only so
As being shared with thee.

“ When lightnings flash among the trees,
Or kites are hovering near,
I fear lest thee alone they seize,
And know no other fear.

“ ’Tis then I feel myself a wife,
And press thy wedded side,
Resolved a union formed for life
Death never shall divide.

“ But oh ! if, fickle and unchaste,
(Forgive a transient thought,)
Thou couldst become unkind at last,
And scorn thy present lot,

“ No need of lightnings from on high,
Or kites with cruel beak ;
Denied the endearments of thine eye,
This widowed heart would break.”

Thus sang the sweet sequestered bird,
Soft as the passing wind,
And I recorded what I heard,
A lesson for mankind.

A FABLE

A RAVEN, while with glossy breast
Her new-laid eggs she fondly pressed,
And, on her wicker-work high mounted,
Her chickens prematurely counted,
(A fault philosophers might blame,
If quite exempted from the same,)
Enjoyed at ease the genial day;
'Twas April as the bumpkins say,
The legislature called it May.
But suddenly a wind, as high
As ever swept a winter sky,
Shook the young leaves about her ears,
And filled her with a thousand fears,
Lest the rude blast should snap the bough,
And spread her golden hopes below.
But just at eve the blowing weather,
And all her fears, were hushed together;
"And now," quoth poor unthinking Ralph,
"'Tis over, and the brood is safe;"
(For ravens, though, as birds of omen,
They teach both conjurers and old women
To tell us what is to befall,
Can't prophesy themselves at all).
The morning came, when neighbour Hodge
Who long had marked her airy lodge,
And destined all the treasure there
A gift to his expecting fair,
Climbed like a squirrel to his dray,
And bore the worthless prize away.

MORAL

'Tis Providence alone secures
In every change both mine and yours:
Safety consists not in escape
From dangers of a frightful shape;
An earthquake may be bid to spare
The man that's strangled by a hair.

Fate steals along with silent tread,
 Found oftenest in what least we dread,
 Frowns in the storm with angry brow,
 But in the sunshine strikes the blow.

A COMPARISON

THE lapse of time and rivers is the same,
 Both speed their journey with a restless stream ;
 The silent pace with which they steal away
 No wealth can bribe, no prayers persuade to stay ;
 Alike irrevocable both when past,
 And a wide ocean swallows both at last.
 Though each resemble each in every part,
 A difference strikes at length the musing heart ;
 Streams never flow in vain ; where streams abound
 How laughs the land with various plenty crowned !
 But time, that should enrich the nobler mind,
 Neglected, leaves a dreary waste behind.

ANOTHER

ADDRESSED TO A YOUNG LADY

SWEET stream, that winds through yonder glade,
 Apt emblem of a virtuous maid !
 Silent and chaste she steals along,
 Far from the world's gay busy throng,
 With gentle yet prevailing force,
 Intent upon her destined course ;
 Graceful and useful all she does,
 Blessing and blest where'er she goes ;
 Pure-bosomed as that watery glass,
 And heaven reflected in her face !

VERSES

SUPPOSED TO BE WRITTEN BY ALEXANDER SELKIRK DURING HIS SOLITARY ABODE IN THE ISLAND OF JUAN FERNANDEZ

I AM monarch of all I survey,
 My right there is none to dispute,
 From the centre all round to the sea,
 I am lord of the fowl and the brute.

O Solitude ! where are the charms
That sages have seen in thy face ?
Better dwell in the midst of alarms
Than reign in this horrible place.

I am out of humanity's reach,
I must finish my journey alone,
Never hear the sweet music of speech,
I start at the sound of my own.
The beasts that roam over the plain
My form with indifference see ;
They are so unacquainted with man,
Their tameness is shocking to me.

Society, friendship, and love,
Divinely bestowed upon man,
Oh, had I the wings of a dove,
How soon would I taste you again !
My sorrows I then might assuage
In the ways of religion and truth,
Might learn from the wisdom of age,
And be cheered by the sallies of youth.

Religion ! what treasure untold
Resides in that heavenly word !
More precious than silver and gold,
Or all that this earth can afford.
But the sound of the church-going bell
These valleys and rocks never heard,
Never sighed at the sound of a knell,
Or smiled when a sabbath appeared.

Ye winds, that have made me your sport,
Convey to this desolate shore
Some cordial endearing report
Of a land I shall visit no more.
My friends,—do they now and then send
A wish or a thought after me ?
O tell me I yet have a friend,
Though a friend I am never to see.

How fleet is a glance of the mind !
Compared with the speed of its flight,
The tempest itself lags behind,
And the swift-winged arrows of light
When I think of my own native land,
In a moment I seem to be there ;
But alas ! recollection at hand
Soon hurries me back to despair.

WILLIAM COWPER

But the sea-fowl is gone to her nest,
 The beast is laid down in his lair,
 Even here is a season of rest,
 And I to my cabin repair.
 There's mercy in every place,
 And mercy, encouraging thought !
 Gives even affliction a grace,
 And reconciles man to his lot.

ON THE PROMOTION OF EDWARD THURLOW, Esq

TO THE LORD HIGH CHANCELLORSHIP OF ENGLAND

ROUND Thurlow's head in early youth,
 And in his sportive days,
 Fair Science poured the light of truth,
 And Genius shed his rays.

" See ! " with united wonder cried
 The experienced and the sage,
 " Ambition in a boy supplied
 With all the skill of age !

" Discernment, eloquence, and grace
 Proclaim him born to sway
 The balance in the highest place,
 And bear the palm away."

The praise bestowed was just and wise ;
 He sprang impetuous forth,
 Secure of conquest where the prize
 Attends superior worth.

So the best courser on the plain
 Ere yet he starts is known,
 And does but at the goal obtain
 What all had deemed his own.

ODE TO PEACE

COME, peace of mind, delightful guest !
 Return and make thy downy nest
 Once more in this sad heart :
 Nor riches I nor power pursue,
 Nor hold forbidden joys in view ;
 We therefore need not part.

LORD THURLOW

FROM AN ENGRAVING BY DICKENSON AFTER THE PORTRAIT BY GEORGE ROMNEY



Where wilt thou dwell, if not with me,
From avarice and ambition free,
And pleasure's fatal wiles?
For whom, alas! dost thou prepare
The sweets that I was wont to share,
The banquet of thy smiles?

The great, the gay, shall they partake
The heaven that thou alone canst make,
And wilt thou quit the stream
That murmurs through the dewy mead,
The grove and the sequestered shed,
To be a guest with them?

For thee I panted, thee I prized,
For thee I gladly sacrificed
Whate'er I loved before,
And shall I see thee start away,
And helpless, hopeless, hear thee say,
"Farewell! we meet no more"?

HUMAN FRAILTY

WEAK and irresolute is man;
The purpose of to-day,
Woven with pains into his plan,
To-morrow rends away.

The bow well bent and smart the spring,
Vice seems already slain,
But passion rudely snaps the string,
And it revives again.

Some foe to his upright intent
Finds out his weaker part,
Virtue engages his assent,
But pleasure wins his heart.

'Tis here the folly of the wise
Through all his art we view,
And, while his tongue the charge denies,
His conscience owns it true.

Bound on a voyage of awful length
And dangers little known,
A stranger to superior strength,
Man vainly trusts his own.

WILLIAM COWPER

But oars alone can ne'er prevail
 To reach the distant coast,
 The breath of heaven must swell the sail,
 Or all the toil is lost.

THE MODERN PATRIOT

REBELLION is my theme all day,
 I only wish 'twould come
 (As who knows but perhaps it may?)
 A little nearer home.

Yon roaring boys, who rave and fight
 On t'other side the Atlantic,
 I always held them in the right,
 But most so when most frantic.

When lawless mobs insult the court,
 That man shall be my toast,
 If breaking windows be the sport,
 Who bravely breaks the most.

But oh! for him my fancy culls
 The choicest flowers she bears,
 Who constitutionally pulls
 Your house about your ears.

Such civil broils are my delight,
 Though some folks can't endure 'em
 Who say the mob are mad outright,
 And that a rope must cure 'em.

A rope! I wish we patriots had
 Such strings for all who need 'em.—
 What! hang a man for going mad!
 Then farewell British freedom.

ON OBSERVING SOME NAMES OF LITTLE NOTE

RECORDED IN THE "BIOGRAPHIA BRITANNICA"

Oh, fond attempt to give a deathless lot
 To names ignoble, born to be forgot!
 In vain, recorded in historic page,
 They court the notice of a future age:

Those twinkling tiny lustres of the land
Drop one by one from Fame's neglecting hand ;
Lethæan gulfs receive them as they fall,
And dark oblivion soon absorbs them all.

So when a child (as playful children use)
Has burnt to tinder a stale last-year's news,
The flame extinct, he views the roving fire—
There goes my lady, and there goes the squire,
There goes the parson, oh illustrious spark !
And there, scarce less illustrious, goes the clerk !

REPORT OF AN ADJUDGED CASE

NOT TO BE FOUND IN ANY OF THE BOOKS

BETWEEN Nose and Eyes a strange contest arose,
The spectacles set them unhappily wrong ;
The point in dispute was, as all the world knows,
To which the said spectacles ought to belong.

So Tongue was the lawyer, and argued the cause
With a great deal of skill, and a wig full of learning ;
While Chief Baron Ear sat to balance the laws,
So famed for his talent in nicely discerning.

“ In behalf of the Nose it will quickly appear,
And your lordship,” he said, “ will undoubtedly find,
That the Nose has had spectacles always in wear,
Which amounts to possession time out of mind.”

Then, holding the spectacles up to the court,
“ Your lordship observes they are made with a straddle,
As wide as the ridge of the Nose is ; in short,
Designed to sit close to it, just like a saddle.

“ Again, would your lordship a moment suppose
('Tis a case that has happened, and may be again,)
That the visage or countenance had not a Nose,
Pray who would, or who could, wear spectacles then ?

“ On the whole it appears, and my argument shows,
With a reasoning the court will never condemn,
That the spectacles plainly were made for the Nose,
And the Nose was as plainly intended for them.”

Then, shifting his side, as a lawyer knows how,
 He pleaded again in behalf of the Eyes :
 But what were his arguments few people know,
 For the court did not think they were equally wise.

So his lordship decreed, with a grave solemn tone,
 Decisive and clear, without one if or but—
 That, whenever the Nose put his spectacles on,
 By daylight or candlelight—Eyes should be shut !

ON THE BURNING OF LORD MANSFIELD'S LIBRARY
 TOGETHER WITH HIS MSS.

BY THE MOB, IN THE MONTH OF JUNE 1780

So then—the Vandals of our isle,
 Sworn foes to sense and law,
 Have burnt to dust a nobler pile
 Than ever Roman saw !

And Murray sighs o'er Pope and Swift,
 And many a treasure more,
 The well-judged purchase and the gift
 That graced his lettered store.

Their pages mangled, burnt, and torn,
 The loss was *his alone* ;
 But ages yet to come shall mourn
 The burning of *his own*.

ON THE SAME

WHEN wit and genius meet their doom
 In all devouring flame,
 They tell us of the fate of Rome,
 And bid us fear the same.

O'er Murray's loss the Muses wept,
 They felt the rude alarm,
 Yet blessed the guardian care that kept
 His sacred head from harm.

There Memory, like the bee that's fed
 From Flora's balmy store,
 The quintessence of all he read
 Had treasured up before.

The lawless herd, with fury blind,
Have done him cruel wrong ;
The flowers are gone—but still we find
The honey on his tongue.

THE LOVE OF THE WORLD REPROVED ; *

OR

HYPOCRISY DETECTED

Thus says the prophet of the Turk,
" Good Mussulman, abstain from pork ;
There is a part in every swine
No friend or follower of mine
May taste, whate'er his inclination,
On pain of excommunication."

Such Mahomet's mysterious charge,
And thus he left the point at large.

Much controversy straight arose,
These choose the back, the belly those ;
By some 'tis confidently said
He meant not to forbid the head ;
While others at that doctrine rail
And piously prefer the tail.
Thus, conscience freed from every clog,
Mahometans eat up the hog.

You laugh ; 'tis well. The tale applied
May make you laugh on t'other side.
" Renounce the world," the preacher cries.
" We do," a multitude replies.
While one as innocent regards
A snug and friendly game at cards ;
And one, whatever you may say,
Can see no evil in a play ;
Some love a concert or a race ;
And others shooting and the chase.
Reviled and loved, renounced and followed,
Thus bit by bit the world is swallowed ;
Each thinks his neighbour makes too free,
Yet likes a slice as well as he :
With sophistry their sauce they sweeten,
Till quite from tail to snout 'tis eaten.

* It may be proper to inform the reader that this piece has already appeared in print, having found its way, though with some unnecessary additions by an unknown hand, into the " Leeds Journal," without the author's privity.

THE LILY AND THE ROSE

THE nymph must lose her female friend
 If more admired than she—
 But where will fierce contention end
 If flowers can disagree ?

Within the garden's peaceful scene
 Appeared two lovely foes,
 Aspiring to the rank of queen,
 The Lily and the Rose.

The Rose soon reddened into rage
 And, swelling with disdain,
 Appealed to many a poet's page
 To prove her right to reign.

The Lily's height bespoke command,
 A fair imperial flower ;
 She seemed designed for Flora's hand,
 The sceptre of her power.

This civil bickering and debate
 The goddess chanced to hear,
 And flew to save, ere yet too late,
 The pride of the parterre.

Yours is, she said, the nobler hue,
 And yours the statelier mien,
 And, till a third surpasses you,
 Let each be deemed a queen.

Thus soothed and reconciled, each seeks
 The fairest British fair ;
 The seat of empire is her cheeks,
 Thy reign united there.

IDEM LATINE REDDITUM

Hæc inimicitias quoties parit æmula forma,
 Quam raro pulchræ pulchra placere potest !
 Sed fines ultra solitos discordia tendit
 Cum flores ipsos bilis et ira movent.

Hortus ubi dulces præbet tacitosque recessûs,
Se rapit in partes gens animosa duas,
Hic sibi regales Amaryllis candida cultûs,
Illic purpureo vindicat ore Rosa.

Ira Rosam et meritis quæsitâ superbia tangunt,
Multaque ferventi vix cohibenda sinû,
Dum sibi fautorum ciet undique nomina vatûm,
Jusque suum, multo carmine fulta, probat.

Altior emicat illa et celso vertice nutat,
Ceu flores inter non habitura parem,
Fastiditque alios, et nata videtur in usûs
Imperii, sceptrum Flora quod ipsa gerat.

Nec Dea non sensit civilis murmura rixæ,
Cui curæ est pictas pandere ruris opes,
Deliciasque suas nunquam non prompta tueri,
Dum licet et locus est, ut tueatur, adest.

“ Et tibi forma datur procerior omnibus,” inquit ;
“ Et tibi, principibus qui solet esse, color ;
Et, donec vincat quædam formosior ambas,
Et tibi reginæ nomen, et esto tibi.”

His ubi sedatus furor est petit utraque nympham,
Qualem inter Veneres Anglia sola parit ;
Hanc penes imperium est, nihil optant amplius, hujus
Regnant in nitidis, et sine lite, genis.

THE NIGHTINGALE AND GLOW-WORM

A NIGHTINGALE, that all day long
Had cheered the village with his song,
Nor yet at eve his note suspended,
Nor yet when eventide was ended,
Began to feel, as well he might,
The keen demands of appetite ;
When, looking eagerly around,
He spied far off, upon the ground,
A something shining in the dark,
And knew the glow-worm by his spark ;
So, stooping down from hawthorn top,
He thought to put him in his crop.
The worm, aware of his intent,
Harangued him thus, right eloquent—

"Did you admire my lamp," quoth he,
 "As much as I your minstrelsy,
 You would abhor to do me wrong,
 As much as I to spoil your song;
 For 'twas the self-same power divine
 Taught you to sing and me to shine;
 That you with music, I with light,
 Might beautify and cheer the night."

The songster heard his short oration
 And, warbling out his approbation,
 Released him, as my story tells,
 And found a supper somewhere else.

Hence jarring sectaries may learn
 Their real interest to discern;
 That brother should not war with brother
 And worry and devour each other;
 But sing and shine by sweet consent
 Till life's poor transient night is spent,
 Respecting, in each other's case,
 The gifts of nature and of grace.

Those Christians best deserve the name
 Who studiously make peace their aim;
 Peace, both the duty and the prize
 Of him that creeps and him that flies.

VOTUM

O MATUTINI rores, auræque salubres,
 O nemora, et lætæ rivis felicibus herbæ,
 Graminei colles, et amœnæ in vallibus umbræ!
 Fata modo dederint quas olim in rure paterno
 Delicias procul arte, procul formidine, novi,
 Quam vellem ignotus, quod mens mea semper avebat,
 Ante larem proprium placidam expectare senectam,
 Tum demum, exactis non infelicitèr annis,
 Sortiri tacitum lapidem, aut sub cespite condi.

ON A GOLDFINCH STARVED TO DEATH IN HIS CAGE

TIME was when I was free as air,
 The thistle's downy seed my fare,
 My drink the morning dew;
 I perched at will on every spray,
 My form genteel, my plumage gay,
 My strains for ever new.

But gaudy plumage, sprightly strain,
And form genteel, were all in vain,
And of a transient date ;
For, caught and caged, and starved to death,
In dying sighs my little breath
Soon passed the wiry grate.

Thanks, gentle swain, for all my woes,
And thanks for this effectual close
And cure of every ill !
More cruelty could none express :
And I, if you had shown me less,
Had been your prisoner still.

THE PINEAPPLE AND THE BEE

THE Pineapples in triple row
Were basking hot, and all in blow ;
A Bee of most discerning taste
Perceived the fragrance as he passed ;
On eager wing the spoiler came,
And searched for crannies in the frame,
Urged his attempt on every side,
To every pane his trunk applied ;
But still in vain, the frame was tight
And only pervious to the light ;
Thus having wasted half the day,
He trimmed his flight another way.

" Methinks," I said, " in thee I find
The sin and madness of mankind.
To joys forbidden man aspires,
Consumes his soul with vain desires ;
Folly the spring of his pursuit,
And disappointment all the fruit.
While Cynthio ogles, as she passes,
The nymph between two chariot glasses,
She is the Pineapple, and he
The silly unsuccessful Bee.
The maid who views with pensive air
The showglass fraught with glittering ware,
Sees watches, bracelets, rings, and locketts,
But sighs at thought of empty pockets ;
Like thine, her appetite is keen,
But ah, the cruel glass between ! "

Our dear delights are often such,
 Exposed to view but not to touch ;
 The sight our foolish heart inflames,
 We long for pineapples in frames ;
 With hopeless wish *one* looks and fingers ;
One breaks the glass, and cuts his fingers ;
 But they whom truth and wisdom lead
 Can gather honey from a weed.

HORACE, Book II. Ode X.

RECEIVE, dear friend, the truths I teach,
 So shalt thou live beyond the reach
 Of adverse fortune's power ;
 Not always tempt the distant deep,
 Nor always timorously creep
 Along the treacherous shore.

He that holds fast the golden mean
 And lives contentedly between
 The little and the great
 Feels not the wants that pinch the poor
 Nor plagues that haunt the rich man's door,
 Imbittering all his state.

The tallest pines feel most the power
 Of wintry blasts ; the loftiest tower
 Comes heaviest to the ground ;
 The bolts that spare the mountain's side
 His cloud-capt eminence divide,
 And spread the ruin round.

The well-informed philosopher
 Rejoices with a wholesome fear,
 And hopes in spite of pain ;
 If Winter bellow from the north,
 Soon the sweet Spring comes dancing forth,
 And Nature laughs again.

What if thine heaven be overcast ?
 The dark appearance will not last ;
 Expect a brighter sky ;
 The God that strings the silver bow
 Awakes sometimes the Muses too,
 And lays his arrows by.

If hindrances obstruct thy way,
 Thy magnanimity display
 And let thy strength be seen ;
 But O ! if Fortune fill thy sail
 With more than a propitious gale,
 Take half thy canvas in !

A REFLECTION ON THE FOREGOING ODE

AND is this all ? Can Reason do no more
 Than bid me shun the deep and dread the shore ?
 Sweet moralist ! afloat on life's rough sea,
 The Christian has an art unknown to thee !
 He holds no parley with unmanly fears ;
 Where duty bids, he confidently steers,
 Faces a thousand dangers at her call,
 And, trusting in his God, surmounts them all.

TRANSLATIONS FROM VINCENT BOURNE

I. THE GLOW-WORM

BENEATH the hedge, or near the stream,
 A worm is known to stray
 That shows by night a lucid beam
 Which disappears by day.

Disputes have been, and still prevail,
 From whence his rays proceed ;
 Some give that honour to his tail,
 And others to his head.

But this is sure—the hand of might
 That kindles up the skies,
 Gives *him* a modicum of light
 Proportioned to his size.

Perhaps indulgent nature meant
 By such a lamp bestowed,
 To bid the traveller, as he went,
 Be careful where he trod,

Nor crush a worm, whose useful light
Might serve, however small,
To show a stumbling stone by night,
And save him from a fall.

Whate'er she meant, this truth divine
Is legible and plain,
'Tis power Almighty bids him shine,
Nor bids him shine in vain.

Ye proud and wealthy ! let this theme
Teach humbler thoughts to you,
Since such a reptile has its gem,
And boasts its splendour too.

II. THE JACKDAW

THERE is a bird who, by his coat,
And by the hoarseness of his note,
Might be supposed a crow ;
A great frequenter of the church,
Where bishop-like he finds a perch,
And dormitory too.

Above the steeple shines a plate,
That turns and turns, to indicate
From what point blows the weather ;
Look up—your brains begin to swim,
'Tis in the clouds—that pleases him,
He chooses it the rather.

Fond of the speculative height,
Thither he wings his airy flight,
And thence securely sees
The bustle and the raree-show
That occupy mankind below,
Secure and at his ease.

You think, no doubt, he sits and muses
On future broken bones and bruises,
If he should chance to fall.
No ; not a single thought like that
Employs his philosophic pate,
Or troubles it at all.

He sees that this great roundabout,
The world, with all its motley rout,
Church, army, physic, law,
Its customs, and its businesses,
Are no concern at all of his,
And says—what says he?—"Caw."

Thrice happy bird ! I too have seen
Much of the vanities of men ;
And sick of having seen 'em,
Would cheerfully these limbs resign
For such a pair of wings as thine,
And such a head between 'em.

III. THE CRICKET

LITTLE inmate, full of mirth,
Chirping on my kitchen hearth,
Wheresoe'er be thine abode,
Always harbinger of good,
Pay me for thy warm retreat
With a song more soft and sweet ;
In return thou shalt receive
Such a strain as I can give.

Thus thy praise shall be expressed,
Inoffensive, welcome guest !
While the rat is on the scout,
And the mouse with curious snout,
With what vermin else infest
Every dish, and spoil the best ;
Frisking thus before the fire,
Thou hast all thine heart's desire.

Though in voice and shape they be
Formed as if akin to thee,
Thou surpassest, happier far,
Happiest grasshoppers that are ;
Theirs is but a summer's song,
Thine endures the winter long,
Unimpaired, and shrill, and clear,
Melody throughout the year.

Neither night, nor dawn of day,
Puts a period to thy play ;
Sing then—and extend thy span
Far beyond the date of man ;

Wretched man, whose years are spent
 In repining discontent,
 Lives not, aged though he be,
 Half a span compared with thee.

IV. THE PARROT

In painted plumes superbly drest,
 A native of the gorgeous East,
 By many a billow tost;
 Poll gains at length the British shore,
 Part of the captain's precious store,
 A present to his Toast.

Belinda's maids are soon preferred
 To teach him now and then a word,
 As Poll can master it;
 But 'tis her own important charge
 To qualify him more at large,
 And make him quite a wit.

"Sweet Poll!" his doting mistress cries,
 "Sweet Poll!" the mimic bird replies,
 And calls aloud for sack.
 She next instructs him in the kiss;
 'Tis now a little one, like Miss,
 And now a hearty smack.

At first he aims at what he hears;
 And, listening close with both his ears,
 Just catches at the sound;
 But soon articulates aloud,
 Much to the amusement of the crowd,
 And stuns the neighbours round.

A querulous old woman's voice
 His humorous talent next employs,
 He scolds and gives the lie.
 And now he sings, and now is sick,
 "Here Sally, Susan, come, come quick,
 Poor Poll is like to die!"

Belinda and her bird! 'tis rare
 To meet with such a well-matched pair,
 The language and the tone,

Each character in every part
Sustained with so much grace and art,
And both in unison.

When children first begin to spell
And stammer out a syllable,
We think them tedious creatures ;
But difficulties soon abate,
When birds are to be taught to prate,
And women are the teachers.

THE SHRUBBERY

WRITTEN IN A TIME OF AFFLICTION

O HAPPY shades ! to me unblest !
Friendly to peace, but not to me !
How ill the scene that offers rest
And heart that cannot rest agree !

This glassy stream, that spreading pine,
Those alders quivering to the breeze,
Might soothe a soul less hurt than mine,
And please, if anything could please.

But fixed unalterable care
Forgoes not what she feels within,
Shows the same sadness everywhere,
And slights the season and the scene.

For all that pleased in wood or lawn,
While peace possessed these silent bowers,
Her animating smile withdrawn,
Has lost its beauties and its powers.

The saint or moralist should tread
This moss-grown alley, musing, slow ;
They seek like me the secret shade,
But not, like me, to nourish woe !

Me fruitful scenes and prospects waste
Alike admonish not to roam ;
These tell me of enjoyments past,
And those of sorrows yet to come.

THE WINTER NOSEGAY

WHAT Nature, alas ! has denied
 To the delicate growth of our isle,
 Art has in a measure supplied,
 And winter is decked with a smile.
 See, Mary, what beauties I bring
 From the shelter of that sunny shed
 Where the flowers have the charms of the spring,
 Though abroad they are frozen and dead.

'Tis a bower of Arcadian sweets,
 Where Flora is still in her prime,
 A fortress to which she retreats
 From the cruel assaults of the clime.
 While earth wears a mantle of snow,
 These pinks are as fresh and as gay
 As the fairest and sweetest that blow
 On the beautiful bosom of May.

See how they have safely survived
 The frowns of a sky so severe ;
 Such Mary's true love, that has lived
 Through many a turbulent year.
 The charms of the late-blowing rose
 Seem graced with a livelier hue,
 And the winter of sorrow best shows
 The truth of a friend such as you.

MUTUAL FORBEARANCE

NECESSARY TO THE HAPPINESS OF THE MARRIED STATE

THE lady thus addressed her spouse—
 "What a mere dungeon is this house !
 By no means large enough, and was it,
 Yet this dull room and that dark closet,
 Those hangings with their worn-out graces,
 Long beards, long noses, and pale faces,
 Are such an antiquated scene,
 They overwhelm me with the spleen."

Sir Humphrey, shooting in the dark,
Makes answer quite beside the mark ;
" No doubt, my dear, I bade him come,
Engaged myself to be at home,
And shall expect him at the door,
Precisely when the clock strikes four."

" You are so deaf," the lady cried,
(And raised her voice, and frowned beside)

" You are so sadly deaf, my dear,
What shall I do to make you hear ? "

" Dismiss poor Harry ! " he replies,
" Some people are more nice than wise,
For one slight trespass all this stir ?
What if he did ride whip and spur ?
'Twas but a mile—your favourite horse
Will never look one hair the worse."

" Well, I protest 'tis past all bearing ! "—

" Child ! I am rather hard of hearing."—

" Yes, truly ; one must scream and bawl :
I tell you you can't hear at all ! "

Then, with a voice exceeding low,
" No matter if you hear or no."

Alas ! and is domestic strife,
That sorest ill of human life,
A plague so little to be feared
As to be wantonly incurred
To gratify a fretful passion
On every trivial provocation ?
The kindest and the happiest pair
Will find occasion to forbear ;
And something, every day they live,
To pity and, perhaps, forgive.
But if infirmities, that fall
In common to the lot of all,
A blemish, or a sense impaired,
Are crimes so little to be spared,
Then farewell all that must create
The comfort of the wedded state ;
Instead of harmony, 'tis jar
And tumult and intestine war.

The love that cheers life's latest stage,
Proof against sickness and old age,
Preserved by virtue from declension,
Becomes not weary of attention ;
But lives when that exterior grace
Which first inspired the flame decays.
'Tis gentle, delicate, and kind,

To faults compassionate or blind,
 And will with sympathy endure
 Those evils it would gladly cure ;
 But angry, coarse, and harsh expression
 Shows love to be a mere profession ;
 Proves that the heart is none of his,
 Or soon expels him if it is.

TO THE REV. MR. NEWTON

AN INVITATION INTO THE COUNTRY

THE swallows in their torpid state
 Compose their useless wing,
 And bees in hives as idly wait
 The call of early spring.

The keenest frost that binds the stream,
 The wildest wind that blows,
 Are neither felt nor feared by them,
 Secure of their repose :

But man, all feeling and awake,
 The gloomy scene surveys ;
 With present ills his heart must ache,
 And pant for brighter days.

Old Winter, halting o'er the mead,
 Bids me and Mary mourn ;
 But lovely Spring peeps o'er his head,
 And whispers your return.

Then April with her sister May
 Shall chase him from the bowers,
 And weave fresh garlands every day,
 To crown the smiling hours.

And if a tear that speaks regret
 Of happier times appear,
 A glimpse of joy that we have met
 Shall shine, and dry the tear.

TRANSLATION OF PRIOR'S CHLOE AND EUPHELIA

MERCATOR, vigiles oculos ut fallere possit,
 Nomine sub ficto trans mare mittit opes ;
 Lenè sonat liquidumque meis Euphelia chordis
 Sed solam exoptant te mea vota Chlœe.

Ad speculum ornabat nitidos Euphelia crines,
 Cum dixit mea lux, heus, cane, sume lyram,
 Namque lyram juxtâ positam cum carmine vidit,
 Suave quidem carmen dulcisonamque lyram.

Fila lyræ vocemque paro, suspiria surgunt,
 Et miscent numeris murmura mæsta meis,
 Dumque tuæ memoro laudes, Euphelia, formæ,
 Tota anima intereâ pendet ab ore Chlœes.

Subrubet illa pudore, et contrahit altera frontem,
 Me torquet mea mens conscia, psallo, tremo ;
 Atque Cupidineâ dixit Dea cincta coronâ
 Heu ! fallendi artem quam didicere parum.

BOADICEA. AN ODE.

WHEN the British warrior queen,
 Bleeding from the Roman rods,
 Sought, with an indignant mien,
 Counsel of her country's gods,

Sage beneath a spreading oak
 Sat the Druid, hoary chief,
 Every burning word he spoke
 Full of rage and full of grief:

" Princess ! if our aged eyes
 Weep upon thy matchless wrongs,
 'Tis because resentment ties
 All the terrors of our tongues.

" Rome shall perish—write that word
 In the blood that she has spilt ;
 Perish hopeless and abhorred,
 Deep in ruin as in guilt.

"Rome, for empire far renowned,
Tramples on a thousand states;
Soon her pride shall kiss the ground,—
Hark! the Gaul is at her gates.

"Other Romans shall arise,
Heedless of a soldier's name,
Sounds, not arms, shall win the prize,
Harmony the path to fame.

"Then the progeny that springs
From the forests of our land,
Armed with thunder, clad with wings,
Shall a wider world command.

"Regions Cæsar never knew
Thy posterity shall sway,
Where his eagles never flew,
None invincible as they."

Such the bard's prophetic words,
Pregnant with celestial fire,
Bending as he swept the chords
Of his sweet but awful lyre.

She, with all a monarch's pride,
Felt them in her bosom glow,
Rushed to battle, fought and died,
Dying, hurled them at the foe.

"Ruffians, pitiless as proud,
Heaven awards the vengeance due;
Empire is on us bestowed,
Shame and ruin wait for you!"

HEROISM

THERE was a time when Ætna's silent fire
Slept unperceived, the mountain yet entire;
When, conscious of no danger from below,
She towered a cloud-capt pyramid of snow.
No thunders shook with deep intestine sound
The blooming groves that girdled her around;
Her unctuous olives and her purple vines,
(Unfelt the fury of those bursting mines)

The peasant's hopes, and not in vain, assured,
 In peace upon her sloping sides matured,
 When on a day, like that of the last doom,
 A conflagration labouring in her womb,
 She teemed and heaved with an infernal birth,
 That shook the circling seas and solid earth.
 Dark and voluminous the vapours rise,
 And hang their horrors in the neighbouring skies,
 While through the Stygian veil that blots the day
 In dazzling streaks the vivid lightnings play.
 But oh ! what muse, and in what powers of song,
 Can trace the torrent as it burns along ?
 Havoc and devastation in the van,
 It marches o'er the prostrate works of man,
 Vines, olives, herbage, forests disappear,
 And all the charms of a Sicilian year.

Revolving seasons, fruitless as they pass,
 See it an uninformed and idle mass,
 Without a soil to invite the tiller's care,
 Or blade that might redeem it from despair.
 Yet time at length (what will not time achieve ?)
 Clothes it with earth, and bids the produce live.
 Once more the spiry myrtle crowns the glade,
 And ruminating flocks enjoy the shade.
 O bliss precarious, and unsafe retreats !
 O charming paradise of short-lived sweets !
 The self-same gale that wafts the fragrance round
 Brings to the distant ear a sullen sound :
 Again the mountain feels the imprisoned foe,
 Again pours ruin on the vale below,
 Ten thousand swains the wasted scene deplore,
 That only future ages can restore.

Ye monarchs, whom the lure of honour draws,
 Who write in blood the merits of your cause,
 Who strike the blow, then plead your own defence,
 Glory your aim, but justice your pretence,
 Behold in Ætna's emblematic fires
 The mischiefs your ambitious pride inspires !

Fast by the stream that bounds your just domain,
 And tells you where ye have a right to reign,
 A nation dwells, not envious of your throne,
 Studious of peace, their neighbours' and their own.
 Ill-fated race ! how deeply must they rue
 Their only crime, vicinity to you !

The trumpet sounds, your legions swarm abroad,
Through the ripe harvest lies their destined road,
At every step beneath their feet they tread
The life of multitudes, a nation's bread !
Earth seems a garden in its loveliest dress
Before them, and behind a wilderness ;
Famine, and pestilence her first-born son,
Attend to finish what the sword begun ;
And echoing praises such as fiends might earn,
And folly pays, resound at your return.
A calm succeeds ;—but plenty, with her train
Of heartfelt joys, succeeds not soon again,
And years of pining indigence must show
What scourges are the gods that rule below.

Yet man, laborious man, by slow degrees,
(Such is his thirst of opulence and ease,)
Plies all the sinews of industrious toil,
Gleans up the refuse of the general spoil,
Rebuilds the towers that smoked upon the plain,
And the sun gilds the shining spires again.

Increasing commerce and reviving art
Renew the quarrel on the conqueror's part ;
And the sad lesson must be learned once more,
That wealth within is ruin at the door.

What are ye, monarchs, laurelled heroes, say,
But Ætnas of the suffering world ye sway ?
Sweet nature, stripped of her embroidered robe,
Deplores the wasted regions of her globe,
And stands a witness at truth's awful bar
To prove you there destroyers, as ye are.

Oh place me in some heaven-protected isle,
Where peace and equity and freedom smile,
Where no volcano pours his fiery flood,
No crested warrior dips his plume in blood,
Where power secures what industry has won,
Where to succeed is not to be undone,
A land that distant tyrants hate in vain,
In Britain's isle, beneath a George's reign.

THE POET, THE OYSTER, AND SENSITIVE PLANT

AN Oyster, cast upon the shore,
Was heard, though never heard before,
Complaining in a speech well worded,
And worthy thus to be recorded—

“ Ah, hapless wretch ! condemned to dwell
For ever in my native shell,
Ordained to move when others please,
Not for my own content or ease,
But tossed and buffeted about,
Now in the water, and now out.
'Twere better to be born a stone,
Of ruder shape and feeling none,
Than with a tenderness like mine,
And sensibilities so fine !
I envy that unfeeling shrub,
Fast-rooted against every rub.”

The plant he meant grew not far off,
And felt the sneer with scorn enough ;
Was hurt, disgusted, mortified,
And with asperity replied :—

(“ When,” cry the botanists, and stare,
“ Did plants called Sensitive grow there ? ”
No matter when—a poet's muse is
To make them grow just where she chooses.)

“ You shapeless nothing in a dish !
You that are but almost a fish,
I scorn your coarse insinuation,
And have most plentiful occasion
To wish myself the rock I view,
Or such another dolt as you.
For many a grave and learned clerk,
And many a gay unlettered spark,
With curious touch examines me,
If I can feel as well as he ;
And when I bend, retire, and shrink,
Says—‘ Well, 'tis more than one would think ! ’
Thus life is spent (oh fie upon't !)
In being touched, and crying ‘ Don't ! ’ ”

A poet, in his evening walk,
 O'erheard and checked this idle talk.
 "And your fine sense," he said, "and yours,
 Whatever evil it endures,
 Deserves not, if so soon offended,
 Much to be pitied or commended.
 Disputes, though short, are far too long
 Where both alike are in the wrong ;
 Your feelings in their full amount
 Are all upon your own account.

You, in your grotto-work enclosed,
 Complain of being thus exposed,
 Yet nothing feel in that rough coat,
 Save when the knife is at your throat,
 Wherever driven by wind or tide,
 Exempt from every ill beside.

And as for you, my Lady Squeamish,
 Who reckon every touch a blemish,
 If all the plants that can be found
 Embellishing the scene around
 Should droop and wither where they grow,
 You would not feel at all, not you.
 The noblest minds their virtue prove
 By pity, sympathy, and love :
 These, these are feelings truly fine,
 And prove their owner half divine."

His censure reached them as he dealt it,
 And each by shrinking showed he felt it.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM CAWTHORNE UNWIN

UNWIN, I should but ill repay
 The kindness of a friend,
 Whose worth deserves as warm a lay
 As ever friendship penned,
 Thy name omitted in a page
 That would reclaim a vicious age.

A union formed, as mine with thee,
 Not rashly or in sport,
 May be as fervent in degree,
 And faithful in its sort,
 And may as rich in comfort prove,
 As that of true fraternal love.

The bud inserted in the rind,
The bud of peach or rose,
Adorns, though differing in its kind,
The stock whereon it grows,
With flower as sweet, or fruit as fair,
As if produced by nature there.

Not rich, I render what I may ;
I seize thy name in haste,
And place it in this first assay,
Lest this should prove the last.
'Tis where it should be—in a plan
That holds in view the good of man.

The poet's lyre, to fix his fame,
Should be the poet's heart ;
Affection lights a brighter flame
Than ever blazed by art.
No muses on these lines attend,
I sink the poet in the friend.



COWPER

FROM THE CRAYON PORTRAIT BY GEORGE ROMNEY

**T H E
T A S K,
A
P O E M,
I N S I X B O O K S.**

**By WILLIAM COWPER,
OF THE INNER TEMPLE, ESQ.**

Fit surculus arbor.

ANONYM.

To which are added,

BY THE SAME AUTHOR,

**AN EPISTLE to JOSEPH HILL, Esq. TIROCINIUM, or a
REVIEW of SCHOOLS, and the HISTORY of JOHN GILPIN.**

**L O N D O N :
PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON, No 72, ST. PAUL'S
CHURCH-YARD :**

1785.

[Copy of the title-page of Cowper's second publication.]

ADVERTISEMENT

THE history of the following production is briefly this. A lady, fond of blank verse, demanded a poem of that kind from the author, and gave him the SOFA for a subject. He obeyed; and, having much leisure, connected another subject with it; and, pursuing the train of thought to which his situation and turn of mind led him, brought forth at length, instead of the trifle which he at first intended, a serious affair—a Volume.

In the poem on the subject of Education, he would be very sorry to stand suspected of having aimed his censure at any particular school. His objections are such as naturally apply themselves to schools in general. If there were not, as for the most part there is, wilful neglect in those who manage them, and an omission even of such discipline as they are susceptible of, the objects are yet too numerous for minute attention; and the aching hearts of ten thousand parents, mourning under the bitterest of all disappointments, attest the truth of the allegation. His quarrel, therefore, is with the mischief at large, and not with any particular instance of it.

THE TASK

BOOK I

THE SOFA

ARGUMENT.—Historical deduction of seats, from the stool to the sofa—A school-boy's ramble—A walk in the country—The scene described—Rural sounds as well as sights delightful—Another walk—Mistake concerning the charms of solitude corrected—Colonnades commended—Alcove, and the view from it—The wilderness—The grove—The thresher—The necessity and the benefits of exercise—The works of nature superior to, and in some instances inimitable by, art—The wearisomeness of what is commonly called a life of pleasure—Change of scene sometimes expedient—A common described, and the character of crazy Kate introduced upon it—Gipsies—The blessings of civilized life—That state most favourable to virtue—The South Sea islanders compassionated, but chiefly Omai—His present state of mind supposed—Civilized life friendly to virtue, but not great cities—Great cities, and London in particular, allowed their due praise, but censured—Fête champêtre—The book concludes with a reflection on the fatal effects of dissipation and effeminacy upon our public measures.

I SING the Sofa. I who lately sang
Truth, Hope, and Charity, and touched with awe
The solemn chords, and with a trembling hand
Escaped with pain from that adventurous flight,
Now seek repose upon an humbler theme;
The theme though humble, yet august and proud
The occasion—for the Fair commands the song.

Time was, when clothing sumptuous or for use,
Save their own painted skins, our sires had none.
As yet black breeches were not, satin smooth,
Or velvet soft, or plush with shaggy pile:
The hardy chief, upon the rugged rock
Washed by the sea, or on the gravelly bank
Thrown up by wintry torrents roaring loud,
Fearless of wrong, reposed his weary strength.
Those barbarous ages past, succeeded next
The birthday of invention, weak at first,
Dull in design, and clumsy to perform.

Joint-stools were then created ; on three legs
Upborne they stood :—three legs upholding firm 20
A massy slab, in fashion square or round.

On such a stool immortal Alfred sat,
And swayed the sceptre of his infant realms ;
And such in ancient halls and mansions drear
May still be seen, but perforated sore
And drilled in holes the solid oak is found,
By worms voracious eating through and through.

At length a generation more refined
Improved the simple plan, made three legs four, 30
Gave them a twisted form vermicular,
And o'er the seat with plenteous wadding stuffed
Induced a splendid cover, green and blue,
Yellow and red, of tapestry richly wrought
And woven close, or needlework sublime.
There might ye see the peony spread wide,
The full-blown rose, the shepherd and his lass,
Lap-dog and lambkin with black staring eyes,
And parrots with twin cherries in their beak.

Now came the cane from India, smooth and bright
With Nature's varnish ; severed into stripes 40
That interlaced each other, these supplied
Of texture firm a lattice-work, that braced
The new machine, and it became a chair.
But restless was the chair ; the back erect
Distressed the weary loins that felt no ease ;
The slippery seat betrayed the sliding part
That pressed it, and the feet hung dangling down,
Anxious in vain to find the distant floor.

These for the rich ; the rest, whom fate had placed
In modest mediocrity, content 50

With base materials, sat on well-tanned hides
Obdurate and unyielding, glassy smooth,
With here and there a tuft of crimson yarn,
Or scarlet crewel in the cushion fixed :
If cushion might be called what harder seemed
Than the firm oak of which the frame was formed.

No want of timber then was felt or feared
In Albion's happy isle. The lumber stood
Ponderous, and fixed by its own massy weight.
But elbows still were wanting ; these, some say, 60
An alderman of Cripplegate contrived,
And some ascribe the invention to a priest
Burly and big, and studious of his ease.
But rude at first, and not with easy slope
Receding wide, they pressed against the ribs,

And bruised the side, and elevated high
 Taught the raised shoulders to invade the ears.
 Long time elapsed or e'er our rugged sires
 Complained, though incommodiously pent in,
 And ill at ease behind. The ladies first

70

'Gan murmur, as became the softer sex.
 Ingenious fancy, never better pleased
 Than when employed to accommodate the fair,
 Heard the sweet moan with pity, and devised
 The soft settee; one elbow at each end,
 And in the midst an elbow, it received,
 United yet divided, twain at once.

So sit two kings of Brentford on one throne;
 And so two citizens who take the air
 Close packed and smiling, in a chaise and one.

80

But relaxation of the languid frame,
 By soft recumbency of outstretched limbs,
 Was bliss reserved for happier days;—so slow
 The growth of what is excellent, so hard
 To attain perfection in this nether world.

Thus first necessity invented stools,
 Convenience next suggested elbow-chairs,
 And luxury the accomplished sofa last.

The nurse sleeps sweetly, hired to watch the sick,
 Whom snoring she disturbs. As sweetly he
 Who quits the coach-box at the midnight hour
 To sleep within the carriage more secure,
 His legs depending at the open door.

90

Sweet sleep enjoys the curate in his desk,
 The tedious rector drawling o'er his head,
 And sweet the clerk below: but neither sleep
 Of lazy nurse, who snores the sick man dead,
 Nor his who quits the box at midnight hour
 To slumber in the carriage more secure,
 Nor sleep enjoyed by curate in his desk,
 Nor yet the dozings of the clerk, are sweet,
 Compared with the repose the SOFA yields.

100

Oh! may I live exempted (while I live
 Guiltless of pampered appetite obscene)
 From pangs arthritic that infest the toe
 Of libertine excess. The Sofa suits

The gouty limb, 'tis true; but gouty limb,
 Though on a Sofa, may I never feel:

For I have loved the rural walk through lanes
 Of grassy swarth, close cropped by nibbling sheep
 And skirted thick with intertexture firm
 Of thorny boughs; have loved the rural walk

110

O'er hills, through valleys, and by rivers' brink,
 E'er since a truant boy I passed my bounds
 To enjoy a ramble on the banks of Thames;
 And still remember, nor without regret
 Of hours that sorrow since has much endeared,
 How oft, my slice of pocket store consumed,
 Still hungering, penniless and far from home,
 I fed on scarlet hips and stony haws,
 Or blushing crabs, or berries that emboss
 The bramble, black as jet, or sloes austere.
 Hard fare ! but such as boyish appetite
 Disdains not, nor the palate, undepraved
 By culinary arts, unsavoury deems.

120

No Sofa then awaited my return,
 Nor Sofa then I needed. Youth repairs
 His wasted spirits quickly, by long toil
 Incurring short fatigue ; and though our years,
 As life declines, speed rapidly away,
 And not a year but pilfers as he goes
 Some youthful grace that age would gladly keep,
 A tooth or auburn lock, and by degrees
 Their length and colour from the locks they spare,
 The elastic spring of an unwearied foot
 That mounts the stile with ease, or leaps the fence,
 That play of lungs, inhaling and again
 Respiring freely the fresh air, that makes
 Swift pace or steep ascent no toil to me,
 Mine have not pilfered yet ; nor yet impaired
 My relish of fair prospect : scenes that soothed
 Or charmed me young, no longer young, I find
 Still soothing and of power to charm me still.

130

And witness, dear companion of my walks,
 Whose arm this twentieth winter I perceive
 Fast locked in mine, with pleasure such as love,
 Confirmed by long experience of thy worth
 And well-tried virtues, could alone inspire,
 Witness a joy that thou hast doubled long.
 Thou knowest my praise of nature most sincere,
 And that my raptures are not conjured up
 To serve occasions of poetic pomp,
 But genuine, and art partner of them all.

140

How oft upon yon eminence our pace
 Has slackened to a pause, and we have borne
 The ruffling wind, scarce conscious that it blew,
 While admiration feeding at the eye,
 And still unsated, dwelt upon the scene.
 Thence with what pleasure have we just discerned

150

B

THE ELMS

FROM A DRAWING BY JOHN GHEIG ENGRAVED IN "COWPER ILLUSTRATED BY A SERIES
OF VIEWS, 1803"

The distant plough slow moving, and beside 160
His labouring team, that swerved not from the track,
The sturdy swain diminished to a boy.

Here Ouse, slow winding through a level plain
Of spacious meads with cattle sprinkled o'er,
Conducts the eye along his sinuous course
Delighted. There, fast rooted in his bank,
Stand, never overlooked, our favourite elms,
That screen the herdsman's solitary hut ;
While far beyond, and overthwart the stream,
That, as with molten glass, inlays the vale, 170
The sloping land recedes into the clouds ;
Displaying on its varied side the grace
Of hedge-row beauties numberless, square tower,
Tall spire, from which the sound of cheerful bells
Just undulates upon the listening ear ;

Groves, heaths, and smoking villages remote.
Scenes must be beautiful which, daily viewed,
Please daily, and whose novelty survives
Long knowledge and the scrutiny of years :
Praise justly due to those that I describe. 180

Nor rural sights alone, but rural sounds
Exhilarate the spirit, and restore
The tone of languid nature. Mighty winds,
That sweep the skirt of some far-spreading wood
Of ancient growth, make music not unlike
The dash of ocean on his winding shore,
And lull the spirit while they fill the mind,
Unnumbered branches waving in the blast,
And all their leaves fast fluttering, (all at once.)
Nor less composure waits upon the roar 190
Of distant floods, or on the softer voice
Of neighbouring fountain, or of rills that slip
Through the cleft rock, and, chiming as they fall
Upon loose pebbles, lose themselves at length
In matted grass, that with a livelier green
Betrays the secret of their silent course.

Nature inanimate employs sweet sounds,
But animated nature sweeter still,
To soothe and satisfy the human ear.
Ten thousand warblers cheer the day, and one 200
The livelong night ; nor these alone, whose notes
Nice-fingered art must emulate in vain,
But cawing rooks, and kites that swim sublime
In still repeated circles, screaming loud,
The jay, the pie, and even the boding owl
That hails the rising moon, have charms for me.

Sounds inharmonious in themselves and harsh,
Yet, heard in scenes where peace for ever reigns;
And only there, please highly for their sake.

Peace to the artist, whose ingenious thought
Devised the weather-house, that useful toy!

210

Fearless of humid air and gathering rains
Forth steps the man, an emblem of myself;
More delicate, his timorous mate retires.
When winter soaks the fields, and female feet,
Too weak to struggle with tenacious clay,
Or ford the rivulets, are best at home,
The task of new discoveries falls on me.

At such a season, and with such a charge,
Once went I forth, and found, till then unknown,
A cottage, whither oft we since repair:

220

'Tis perched upon the green-hill top, but, close
Environed with a ring of branching elms
That overhang the thatch, itself unseen,
Peeps at the vale below; so thick beset
With foliage of such dark redundant growth,
I called the low-roofed lodge the *Peasant's Nest*.
And, hidden as it is, and far remote

From such unpleasing sounds as haunt the ear
In village or in town, the bay of curs

230

Incessant, clinking hammers, grinding wheels,
And infants clamorous whether pleased or pained,
Oft have I wished the peaceful covert mine.

Here, I have said, at least I should possess

~~The poet's treasure,~~ silence, and indulge

The dreams of fancy, tranquil and secure.

Vain thought! the dweller in that still retreat

Dearly obtains the refuge it affords.

Its elevated site forbids the wretch

To drink sweet waters of the crystal well;

240

He dips his bowl into the weedy ditch,

And heavy-laden brings his beverage home,

Far-fetched and little worth: nor seldom waits,

Dependent on the baker's punctual call,

To hear his creaking panniers at the door,

Angry and sad, and his last crust consumed.

So farewell envy of the *Peasant's Nest*.

If solitude make scant the means of life,

~~Society for me!~~—Thou seeming sweet,

Be still a pleasing object in my view,

250

My visit still, but never mine abode.

Not distant far, a length of colonnade

Invites us: monument of ancient taste,

22

1

THE WEATHER HOUSE, THE PEASANTS NEST, AND COWPER'S HARES

THE WEATHER HOUSE, THE PEASANTS NEST, AND COWPER'S HARES
FROM A DRAWING BY WILLIAM BLAKE, ENGRAVED BY HIM FOR MAYEY'S LIFE OF COWPER

SIR JOHN THROCKMORTON, BART.
FROM THE ORIGINAL PORTRAIT BY DOWNMAN

Now scorned, but worthy of a better fate.
 Our fathers knew the value of a screen
 From sultry suns, and in their shaded walks
 And long protracted bowers enjoyed at noon
 The gloom and coolness of declining day.
 We bear our shades about us : self-deprived
 Of other screen, the thin umbrella spread,
 And range an Indian waste without a tree.
 Thanks to Benevolus *—he spares me yet
 These chestnuts ranged in corresponding lines,
 And, though himself so polished, still reprieves
 The obsolete prolixity of shade.

260

Descending now (but cautious lest too fast)
 A sudden steep, upon a rustic bridge
 We pass a gulf, in which the willows dip
 Their pendent boughs, stooping as if to drink.
 Hence, ankle-deep in moss and flowery thyme,
 We mount again, and feel at every step
 Our foot half sunk in hillocks green and soft,
 Raised by the mole, the miner of the soil. *mole*
 He, not unlike the great ones of mankind,
 Disfigures earth, and, plotting in the dark,
 Toils much to earn a monumental pile,
 That may record the mischiefs he has done.

270

The summit gained, behold the proud alcove
 That crowns it ! yet not all its pride secures
 The grand retreat from injuries impressed
 By rural carvers, who with knives deface
 The panels, leaving an obscure rude name,
 In characters uncouth, and spelt amiss.
 So strong the zeal to immortalize himself
 Beats in the breast of man, that even a few,
 Few transient years, won from the abyss abhorred
 Of blank oblivion, seem a glorious prize,
 And even to a clown. Now roves the eye,
 And posted on this speculative height
 Exults in its command. The sheepfold here
 Pours out its fleecy tenants o'er the glebe.
 At first, progressive as a stream, they seek
 The middle field ; but scattered by degrees,
 Each to his choice, soon whiten all the land.
 There from the sunburnt hayfield homeward creeps
 The loaded wain, while, lightened of its charge,
 The wain that meets it passes swiftly by,
 The boorish driver leaning o'er his team
 Vociferous, and impatient of delay.

280

290

* John Courtenay Throckmorton, Esq., of Weston Underwood.

Nor less attractive is the woodland scene, 300
 Diversified with trees of every growth,
 Alike yet various. Here the grey smooth trunks
 Of ash, or lime, or beech, distinctly shine,
 Within the twilight of their distant shades ;
 There lost behind a rising ground, the wood
 Seems sunk, and shortened to its topmost boughs.
 No tree in all the grove but has its charms,
 Though each its hue peculiar : paler some,
 And of a wannish grey ; the willow such,
 And poplar that with silver lines his leaf, 310
 And ash far stretching his umbrageous arm ;
 Of deeper green the elm ; and deeper still,
 Lord of the woods, the long-surviving oak.
 Some glossy-leaved, and shining in the sun,
 The maple, and the beech of oily nuts
 Prolific, and the lime at dewy eve
 Diffusing odours : nor unnoted pass
 The sycamore, capricious in attire,
 Now green, now tawny, and, ere autumn yet
 Have changed the woods, in scarlet honours bright. 320
 O'er these, but far beyond (a spacious map
 Of hill and valley interposed between),
 The Ouse, dividing the well-watered land,
 Now glitters in the sun, and now retires,
 As bashful, yet impatient to be seen.
 Hence the declivity is sharp and short,
 And such the re-ascent ; between them weeps
 A little Naiad her impoverished urn
 All summer long, which winter fills again.
 The folded gates would bar my progress now, 330
 But that the * lord of this enclosed demesne,
 Communicative of the good he owns,
 Admits me to a share : the guiltless eye
 Commits no wrong, nor wastes what it enjoys.
 Refreshing change ! where now the blazing sun ?
 By short transition we have lost his glare,
 And stepped at once into a cooler clime.
 Ye fallen avenues ! once more I mourn
 Your fate unmerited, once more rejoice
 That yet a remnant of your race survives. 340
 How airy and how light the graceful arch,
 Yet awful as the consecrated roof
 Re-echoing pious anthems ! while beneath
 The chequered earth seems restless as a flood
 Brushed by the wind. So sportive is the light

* See the foregoing note.

THE LIME WALK AT WESTON
FROM AN ENGRAVING BY STOCKS AFTER A DRAWING BY W. HARVEY



Shot through the boughs, it dances as they dance,
Shadow and sunshine intermingling quick,
And darkening and enlightening, as the leaves
Play wanton, every moment, every spot.

And now, with nerves new-braced and spirits cheered,
We tread the Wilderness, whose well-rolled walks, 351
With curvature of slow and easy sweep—

Deception innocent—give ample space
To narrow bounds. ~~The Grove receives us next;~~
Between the upright shafts of whose tall elms
We may discern the thresher at his task.

Thump after thump resounds the constant flail
That seems to swing uncertain, and yet falls
Full on the destined ear. Wide flies the chaff;
The rustling straw sends up a frequent mist 360
Of atoms sparkling in the noonday beam.

Come hither, ye that press your beds of down
And sleep not; see him sweating o'er his bread
Before he eats it. 'Tis the primal curse,
But softened into mercy; made the pledge
Of cheerful days, and nights without a groan.

By ceaseless action all that is subsists.
Constant rotation of the unwearied wheel
That nature rides upon maintains her health,
Her beauty, her fertility. She dreads 370
An instant's pause, and lives but while she moves.
Its own revolvency upholds the world.

Winds from all quarters agitate the air
And fit the limpid element for use,
Else noxious: oceans, rivers, lakes, and streams,
All feel the freshening impulse, and are cleansed
By restless undulation. Even the oak

Thrives by the rude concussion of the storm:
He seems indeed indignant, and to feel
The impression of the blast with proud disdain, 380
Frowning as if in his unconscious arm

He held the thunder. But the monarch owes
His firm stability to what he scorns,
More fixed below the more disturbed above.

The law by which all creatures else are bound
Binds man the lord of all. Himself derives
No mean advantage from a kindred cause,
From strenuous toil his hours of sweetest ease.

The sedentary stretch their lazy length
When custom bids, but no refreshment find, 390
For none they need: the languid eye, the cheek
Deserted of its bloom, the flaccid, shrunk,

And withered muscle, and the vapid soul,
 Reproach their owner with that love of rest
 To which he forfeits even the rest he loves.
 Not such the alert and active. Measure life
 By its true worth, the comforts it affords,
 And theirs alone seems worthy of the name.
 Good health and, its associate in the most,
 Good temper; spirits prompt to undertake, 400
 And not soon spent, though in an arduous task;
 The powers of fancy and strong thought, are theirs;
 Even age itself seems privileged in them
 With clear exemption from its own defects.
 A sparkling eye beneath a wrinkled front
 The veteran shows, and, gracing a grey beard
 With youthful smiles, descends toward the grave
 Sprightly, and old almost without decay.

Like a coy maiden, ease, when courted most,
 Farthest retires—an idol at whose shrine 410
 Who oftenest sacrifice are favoured least.
 The love of nature and the scenes she draws
 Is nature's dictate. Strange there should be found
 Who, self-imprisoned in their proud saloons,
 Renounce the odours of the open field
 For the unscented fictions of the loom;
 Who, satisfied with only pencilled scenes,
 Prefer to the performance of a God
 The inferior wonders of an artist's hand.
 Lovely indeed the mimic works of art, 420
 But nature's works far lovelier. I admire,
 None more admires, the painter's magic skill,
 Who shows me that which I shall never see,
 Conveys a distant country into mine,
 And throws Italian light on English walls.
 But imitative strokes can do no more
 Than please the eye, sweet nature every sense.
 The air salubrious of her lofty hills,
 The cheering fragrance of her dewy vales,
 And music of her woods—no works of man ✓ 430
 May rival these; these all bespeak a power
 Peculiar, and exclusively her own.

➤ Beneath the open sky she spreads the feast;
 'Tis free to all—'tis every day renewed;
 Who scorns it starves deservedly at home.
 He does not scorn it who, imprisoned long
 In some unwholesome dungeon, and a prey
 To sallow sickness which the vapours dank
 And clammy of his dark abode have bred,

Escapes at last to liberty and light. 440
 His cheek recovers soon its healthful hue,
 His eye relumines its extinguished fires,
 He walks, he leaps, he runs—is winged with joy
 And riots in the sweets of every breeze.
 He does not scorn it who has long endured
 A fever's agonies, and fed on drugs.
 Not yet the mariner, his blood inflamed
 With acrid salts; his very heart athirst
 To gaze at nature in her green array.
 Upon the ship's tall side he stands, possessed 450
 With visions prompted by intense desire:
 Fair fields appear below, such as he left
 Far distant, such as he would die to find,—
 He seeks them headlong, and is seen no more.

The spleen is seldom felt where Flora reigns;
 The lowering eye, the petulance, the frown,
 And sullen sadness, that o'ershade, distort,
 And mar the face of beauty, when no cause
 For such immeasurable woe appears,
 These Flora banishes, and gives the fair 460
 Sweet smiles, and bloom less transient than her own.
 It is the constant revolution, stale
 And tasteless, of the same repeated joys,
 That palls and satiates, and makes languid life
 A pedler's pack, that bows the bearer down.
 Health suffers, and the spirits ebb; the heart
 Recoils from its own choice—at the full feast
 Is famished—finds no music in the song,
 No smartness in the jest, and wonders why.
 Yet thousands still desire to journey on, 470
 Though halt, and weary of the path they tread:
 The paralytic who can hold her cards
 But cannot play them, borrows a friend's hand
 To deal and shuffle, to divide and sort
 Her mingled suits and sequences, and sits
 Spectatress both and spectacle, a sad
 And silent cipher, while her proxy plays.
 Others are dragged into the crowded room
 Between supporters; and, once seated, sit
 Through downright inability to rise, 480
 Till the stout bearers lift the corpse again.
 These speak a loud memento. Yet even these
 Themselves love life, and cling to it, as he
 That overhangs a torrent to a twig.
 They love it, and yet loathe it; fear to die,
 Yet scorn the purposes for which they live.

Then wherefore not renounce them? No—the dread,
 The slavish dread, of solitude that breeds
 Reflection and remorse, the fear of shame,
 And their inveterate habits, all forbid.

490

Whom call we gay? That honour has been long
 The boast of mere pretenders to the name.
 The innocent are gay—the lark is gay,
 That dries his feathers saturate with dew
 Beneath the rosy cloud, while yet the beams
 Of dayspring overshoot his humble nest.
 The peasant too, a witness of his song,
 Himself a songster, is as gay as he.

But save me from the gaiety of those
 Whose headaches nail them to a noonday bed :
 And save me too from theirs whose haggard eyes
 Flash desperation, and betray their pangs
 For property stripped off by cruel chance ;
 From gaiety that fills the bones with pain,
 The mouth with blasphemy, the heart with woe.

500

The earth was made so various that the mind
 Of desultory man, studious of change,
 And pleased with novelty, might be indulged.
 Prospects, however lovely, may be seen
 Till half their beauties fade ; the weary sight,
 Too well acquainted with their smiles, slides off
 Fastidious, seeking less familiar scenes.

510

Then snug enclosures in the sheltered vale,
 Where frequent hedges intercept the eye,
 Delight us, happy to renounce awhile,
 Not senseless of its charms, what still we love,
 That such short absence may endear it more.
 Then forests, or the savage rock, may please,
 That hides the sea-mew in his hollow clefts
 Above the reach of man : his hoary head,
 Conspicuous many a league, the mariner
 Bound homeward, and in hope already there,
 Greets with three cheers exulting. At his waist
 A girdle of half-withered shrubs he shows,
 And at his feet the baffled billows die.

520

The common, overgrown with fern, and rough
 With prickly gorse, that, shapeless and deformed,
 And dangerous to the touch, has yet its bloom
 And decks itself with ornaments of gold,
 Yields no unpleasing ramble ; there the turf
 Smells fresh, and, rich in odoriferous herbs
 And fungous fruits of earth, regales the sense
 With luxury of unexpected sweets.

530

There often wanders one whom better days
 Saw better clad, in cloak of satin trimmed
 With lace, and hat with splendid riband bound.
 A serving-maid was she, and fell in love
 With one who left her, went to sea, and died.
 Her fancy followed him through foaming waves
 To distant shores, and she would sit and weep 540
 At what a sailor suffers; fancy too,
 Delusive most where warmest wishes are,
 Would oft anticipate his glad return
 And dream of transports she was not to know.
 She heard the doleful tidings of his death,
 And never smiled again. And now she roams
 The dreary waste; there spends the livelong day,
 And there, unless when charity forbids,
 The livelong night. A tattered apron hides,
 Worn as a cloak, and hardly hides, a gown 550
 More tattered still; and both but ill conceal
 A bosom heaved with never-ceasing sighs.
 She begs an idle pin of all she meets,
 And hoards them in her sleeve; but needful food,
 Though pressed with hunger oft, or comelier clothes,
 Though pinched with cold, asks never.—Kate is crazed.

I see a column of slow-rising smoke
 O'ertop the lofty wood that skirts the wild.
 A vagabond and useless tribe there eat
 Their miserable meal. A kettle, slung 560
 Between two poles upon a stick transverse,
 Receives the morsel; flesh obscene of dog,
 Or vermin, or, at best, of cock purloined
 From his accustomed perch. Hard-faring race!
 They pick their fuel out of every hedge,
 Which, kindled with dry leaves, just saves unquenched
 The spark of life. The sportive wind blows wide
 Their fluttering rags and shows a tawny skin,
 The vellum of the pedigree they claim.
 Great skill have they in palmistry, and more 570
 To conjure clean away the gold they touch,
 Conveying worthless dross into its place;
 Loud when they beg, dumb only when they steal.
 Strange! that a creature rational and cast
 In human mould should brutalize by choice
 His nature and, though capable of arts
 By which the world might profit and himself,
 Self banished from society, prefer
 Such squalid sloth to honourable toil!
 Yet even these, though, feigning sickness oft, 580

They swathe the forehead, drag the limping limb,
 And vex their flesh with artificial sores,
 Can change their whine into a mirthful note
 When safe occasion offers; and with dance,
 And music of the bladder and the bag,
 Beguile their woes and make the woods resound.
 Such health and gaiety of heart enjoy
 The houseless rovers of the sylvan world;
 And, breathing wholesome air and wandering much,
 Need other physic none to heal the effects
 Of loathsome diet, penury, and cold.

590

Blest he, though undistinguished from the crowd
 By wealth or dignity, who dwells secure
 Where man, by nature fierce, has laid aside
 His fierceness, having learnt, though slow to learn,
 The manners and the arts of civil life.

His wants, indeed, are many; but supply
 Is obvious, placed within the easy reach
 Of temperate wishes and industrious hands.

600

Here virtue thrives as in her proper soil;
 Not rude and surly and beset with thorns,
 And terrible to sight, as when she springs
 (If e'er she spring spontaneous) in remote
 And barbarous climes, where violence prevails,
 And strength is lord of all; but gentle, kind,
 By culture tamed, by liberty refreshed,
 And all her fruits by radiant truth matured.

War and the chase engross the savage whole:

War followed for revenge, or to supplant

The envied tenants of some happier spot;

610

The chase for sustenance, precarious trust!

His hard condition with severe constraint

Binds all his faculties, forbids all growth

Of wisdom, proves a school in which he learns

Sly circumvention, unrelenting hate,

Mean self-attachment, and scarce aught beside.

Thus fare the shivering natives of the north,

And thus the rangers of the western world,

Where it advances far into the deep,

Towards the Antarctic. Even the favoured isles

620

So lately found, although the constant sun

Cheer all their seasons with a grateful smile,

Can boast but little virtue: and, inert

Through plenty, lose in morals what they gain

In manners, victims of luxurious ease.

These therefore I can pity placed remote

From all that science traces, art invents,

Or inspiration teaches ; and enclosed
 In boundless oceans, never to be passed
 By navigators uninformed as they, 630
 Or ploughed perhaps by British bark again.
 But far beyond the rest, and with most cause,
 Thee, gentle savage ! * whom no love of thee
 Or thine, but curiosity, perhaps,
 Or else vain-glory, prompted us to draw
 Forth from thy native bowers, to show thee here
 With what superior skill we can abuse
 The gifts of providence, and squander life.
 The dream is past ; and thou hast found again
 Thy cocoas and bananas, palms and yams, 640
 And homestall thatched with leaves. But hast thou found
 Their former charms ? And having seen our state,
 Our palaces, our ladies, and our pomp
 Of equipage, our gardens, and our sports,
 And heard our music ; are thy simple friends,
 Thy simple fare, and all thy plain delights
 As dear to thee as once ? And have thy joys
 Lost nothing by comparison with ours ?
 Rude as thou art (for we returned thee rude
 And ignorant, except of outward show), 650
 I cannot think thee yet so dull of heart
 And spiritless, as never to regret —
 Sweets tasted here, and left as soon as known.
 Methinks I see thee straying on the beach,
 And asking of the surge that bathes thy foot
 If ever it has washed our distant shore.
 I see thee weep, and thine are honest tears,
 A patriot's for his country. Thou art sad
 At thought of her forlorn and abject state,
 From which no power of thine can raise her up. 660
 Thus fancy paints thee, and, though apt to err,
 Perhaps errs little when she paints thee thus.
 She tells me too that duly every morn
 Thou climb'st the mountain top, with eager eye
 Exploring far and wide the watery waste
 For sight of ship from England. Every speck
 Seen in the dim horizon turns thee pale
 With conflict of contending hopes and fears.
 But comes at last the dull and dusky eve,
 And sends thee to thy cabin, well prepared 670
 To dream all night of what the day denied.
 Alas ! expect it not. We found no bait
 To tempt us in thy country. Doing good,

* Omai.

Disinterested good, is not our trade.

We travel far, 'tis true, but not for nought ;
And must be bribed to compass earth again
By other hopes and richer fruits than yours.

~~But though true worth and virtue, in the mild~~

~~And genial soil of cultivated life,~~

Thrive most, and may perhaps thrive only there, 680

Yet not in cities oft : in proud and gay

~~And gain-devoted cities. Thither now,~~

As to a common and most noisome sewer,

The dregs and feculence of every land.

In cities foul example on most minds

Begets its likeness. Rank abundance breeds

In gross and pampered cities sloth and lust,

And wantonness and gluttonous excess.

In cities vice is hidden with most ease,

Or seen with least reproach ; and virtue, taught 690

By frequent lapse, can hope no triumph there

Beyond the achievement of successful flight.

I do confess them nurseries of the arts,

In which they flourish most ; where, in the beams

Of warm encouragement, and in the eye

Of public note, they reach their perfect size.

~~Such London is, by taste and wealth proclaimed~~

The fairest capital of all the world.

By riot and incontinence the worst.

There, touched by Reynolds, a dull blank becomes 700

A lucid mirror, in which nature sees

All her reflected features. Bacon there

Gives more than female beauty to a stone,

And Chatham's eloquence to marble lips.

Nor does the chisel occupy alone

The powers of sculpture, but the style as much ;

Each province of her art her equal care.

With nice incision of her guided steel

She ploughs a brazen field, and clothes a soil

So sterile with what charms soe'er she will, 710

The richest scenery and the loveliest forms.

Where finds philosophy her eagle eye

With which she gazes at yon burning disk

Undazzled, and detects and counts his spots ?

In London. Where her implements exact

With which she calculates, computes, and scans

All distance, motion, magnitude, and now

Measures an atom, and now girds a world ?

In London. Where has commerce such a mart,

So rich, so thronged, so drained, and so supplied, 720

As London ; opulent, enlarged, and still
Increasing London ? Babylon of old
Not more the glory of the earth than she,
A more accomplished world's chief glory now.

She has her praise. Now mark a spot or two
That so much beauty would do well to purge ;
And show this queen of cities that so fair
May yet be foul, so witty yet not wise.

It is not seemly, nor of good report,
That she is slack in discipline ; more prompt
To avenge than to prevent the breach of law :

730

That she is rigid in denouncing death
On petty robbers, and indulges life
And liberty, and oft-times honour too,
To speculators of the public gold :

That thieves at home must hang, but he that puts
Into his overgorged and bloated purse
The wealth of Indian provinces escapes.

Nor is it well, nor can it come to good,
That, through profane and infidel contempt
Of holy writ, she has presumed to annul

740

And abrogate, as roundly as she may,
The total ordinance and will of God ;

~~Advancing fashion to the post of truth,~~
And centering all authority in modes

And customs of her own, till sabbath rites
Have dwindled into unrespected forms,
And knees and hassocks are well-nigh divorced.

God made the country, and man made the town.

What wonder then that health and virtue, gifts
That can alone make sweet the bitter draught
That life holds out to all, should most abound
And least be threatened in the fields and groves ?

750

Possess ye therefore, ye who, borne about
In chariots and sedans, know no fatigue
But that of idleness, and taste no scenes
But such as art contrives, possess ye still
Your element ; there only ye can shine,
There only minds like yours can do no harm.

Our groves were planted to console at noon
The pensive wanderer in their shades. At eve

760

The moonbeam, sliding softly in between
The sleeping leaves, is all the light they wish,
Birds warbling all the music. We can spare
The splendour of your lamps, they but eclipse
Our softer satellite. Your songs confound
Our more harmonious notes : the thrush departs

Scared, and the offended nightingale is mute.
 There is a public mischief in your mirth,
 It plagues your country. Folly such as yours,
 Graced with a sword, and worthier of a fan,
 Has made, which enemies could ne'er have done,
 Our arch of empire, steadfast but for you,
 A mutilated structure, soon to fall.

770

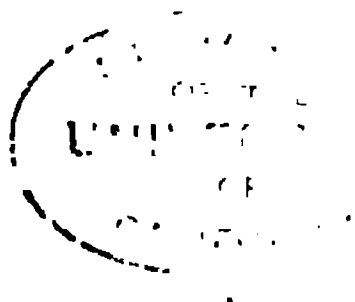
BOOK II

THE TIME-PIECE

ARGUMENT.—Reflections suggested by the conclusion of the former book—Peace among the nations recommended on the ground of their common fellowship in sorrow—Prodigies enumerated—Sicilian earthquakes—Man rendered obnoxious to these calamities by sin—God the agent in them—The philosophy that stops at secondary causes reproved—Our own late miscarriages accounted for—Satirical notice taken of our trips to Fontainebleau—But the pulpit, not satire, the proper engine of reformation—The reverend advertiser of engraved sermons—Petitmaitre parson—The good preacher—Picture of a theatrical clerical coxcomb—Story-tellers and jesters in the pulpit reproved—Apostrophe to popular applause—Retailers of ancient philosophy expostulated with—Sum of the whole matter—Effects of sacerdotal mismanagement on the laity—Their folly and extravagance—The mischiefs of profusion—Profusion itself, with all its consequent evils, ascribed, as to its principal cause, to the want of discipline in the universities.

1-284
 OH for a lodge in some vast wilderness,
 Some boundless contiguity of shade,
 Where rumour of oppression and deceit,
 Of unsuccessful or successful war,
 Might never reach me more! My ear is pained,
 My soul is sick with every day's report
 Of wrong and outrage with which earth is filled.
 There is no flesh in man's obdurate heart,
 It does not feel for man. The natural bond
 Of brotherhood is severed as the flax.
 That falls asunder at the touch of fire.
 He finds his fellow guilty of a skin
 Not coloured like his own and, having power
 To enforce the wrong, for such a worthy cause
 Dooms and devotes him as his lawful prey.

10



THE RUSTIC BRIDGE

FROM A DRAWING BY J. STOREY, ENGRAVED IN "COWPER ILLUSTRATED BY A SERIES
OF VIEWS, 1803"

Lands intersected by a narrow frith
 Abhor each other. Mountains interposed
 Make enemies of nations who had else
 Like kindred drops been mingled into one.
 Thus man devotes his brother, and destroys ; 20
 And, worse than all and most to be deplored,
 As human nature's broadest, foulest blot,
 Chains him, and tasks him, and exacts his sweat
 With stripes that mercy, with a bleeding heart,
 Weeps when she sees inflicted on a beast.
 Then what is man ? And what man seeing this,
 And having human feelings, does not blush
 And hang his head to think himself a man ?
 I ~~would not~~ have a slave to till my ground,
 To carry me, to fan me while I sleep, 30
 And tremble when I wake, for all the wealth
 That sinews bought and sold have ever earned.
 No : dear as freedom is, and in my heart's
 Just estimation prized above all price,
 I ~~had much rather be myself the slave~~
 And wear the bonds, than fasten them on him.
 We have no slaves at home. Then why abroad ?
 And they themselves, once ferried o'er the wave
 That parts us, are emancipate and loosed.
 Slaves cannot breathe in England ; if their lungs 40
 Receive our air that moment they are free,
 They touch our country and their shackles fall.
 That's noble, and bespeaks a nation proud
 And jealous of the blessing. Spread it then,
 And let it circulate through every vein
 Of all your empire, that where Britain's power
 Is felt, mankind may feel her mercy too.
 Sure there is need of social intercourse,
 Benevolence, and peace, and mutual aid,
 Between the nations, in a world that seems 50
 To toll the death-bell of its own decease,
 And by the voice of all its elements
 To preach the general doom.* When were the winds
 Let slip with such a warrant to destroy ?
 When did the waves so haughtily o'erleap
 Their ancient barriers, deluging the dry ?
 Fires from beneath, and meteors † from above,
 Portentous, unexampled, unexplained,
 Have kindled beacons in the skies, and the old
 And crazy earth has had her shaking fits 60

* Alluding to the late calamities at Jamaica.

† Aug. 18, 1783.

More frequent, and forgone her usual rest.
 Is it a time to wrangle, when the props
 And pillars of our planet seem to fail
 And Nature * with a ~~dim and sickly~~ eye
 To wait the close of all? But grant her end
 More distant, and that prophecy demands
 A longer respite, unaccomplished yet;
 Still they are frowning signals, and bespeak
 Displeasure in His breast who smites the earth
 Or heals it, makes it languish or rejoice. 70
 And 'tis but seemly that, where all deserve
 And stand exposed by common peccancy
 To what no few have felt, there should be peace,
 And brethren in calamity should love.

Alas for Sicily! rude fragments now
 Lie scattered where the shapely column stood.
 Her palaces are dust. In all her streets
 The voice of singing and the sprightly chord
 Are silent. Revelry and dance and show
 Suffer a syncope and solemn pause, 80
 While God performs upon the trembling stage
 Of His own works His dreadful part alone.
~~How does the earth receive Him?~~—with what signs
 Of gratulation and delight, her King?
 Pours she not all her choicest fruits abroad,
 Her sweetest flowers, her aromatic gums,
 Disclosing paradise where'er He treads?
~~She~~ quakes at His approach. Her hollow womb
 Conceiving thunders, through a thousand deeps
 And fiery caverns, roars beneath His foot. 90
 The hills move lightly, and the mountains smoke,
 For He has touched them. From the extremest point
 Of elevation down into the abyss
 His wrath is busy and His frown is felt.
 The rocks fall headlong, and the valleys rise,
 The rivers die into offensive pools,
 And, charged with putrid verdure, breathe a gross
 And mortal nuisance into all the air.
 What solid was by transformation strange
 Grows fluid, and the fixed and rooted earth, 100
 Tormented into billows, heaves and swells,
 Or with vortiginous and hideous whirl
 Sucks down its prey insatiable. Immense
 The tumult and the overthrow, the pangs
 And agonies of human and of brute

* Alluding to the fog that covered both Europe and Asia during the whole summer of 1783.

Multitudes, fugitive on every side
 And fugitive in vain. The sylvan scene
 Migrates uplifted, and with all its soil
 Alighting in far distant fields, finds out
 A new possessor, and survives the change. 110
 Ocean has caught the frenzy and, upwrought
 To an enormous and o'erbearing height,
 Not by a mighty wind, but by that voice
 Which winds and waves obey, invades the shore
 Resistless. ~~Never such a sudden flood,~~
 Upridged so high, and sent on such a charge,
 Possessed an inland scene. Where now the throng
 That pressed the beach, and hasty to depart
 Looked to the sea for safety? They are gone,
 Gone with the reflux wave into the deep— 120
 A prince with half his people! Ancient towers,
 And roofs embattled high, the gloomy scenes
 Where beauty oft and lettered worth consume
 Life in the unproductive shades of death,
 Fall prone; the pale inhabitants come forth,
 And, happy in their unforeseen release
 From all the rigours of restraint, enjoy
 The terrors of the day that sets them free.
 Who then that has thee would not hold thee fast,
 Freedom! whom they that lose thee, so regret
 That even a judgment making way for thee
 Seems in their eyes a mercy for thy sake?

Such evil sin hath wrought; and such a flame
 Kindled in heaven that it burns down to earth,
 And, in the furious inquest that it makes
 On God's behalf, lays waste his fairest works.
 The very elements, though each be meant
 The minister of man to serve his wants,
 Conspire against him. With his breath he draws
 A plague into his blood; and cannot use 140
 Life's necessary means, but he must die.
 Storms rise to o'erwhelm him: or if stormy winds
 Rise not, the waters of the deep shall rise,
 And, needing none assistance of the storm,
 Shall roll themselves ashore, and reach him there.
 The earth shall shake him out of all his holds,
 Or make his house his grave: nor so content,
 Shall counterfeit the motions of the flood,
 And drown him in her dry and dusty gulfs.
 What then? Were they the wicked above all, 150
 And we the righteous, whose fast-anchored isle
 Moved not while theirs was rocked like a light skiff,

The sport of every wave? No : none are clear,
 And none than we more ~~guilty~~. But where all
 Stand chargeable with guilt, and to the shafts
 Of wrath obnoxious, God may choose his mark,
 May punish, if he please, the less, to warn
 The more, malignant. If he spared not them,
 Tremble and be amazed at thine escape
 Far guiltier England, lest he spare not thee !

160

Happy the man who sees a God employed
 In all the good and ill that chequer life !
 Resolving all ~~events~~, with their effects
 And manifold results, into the will
 And arbitration wise of the Supreme.
 Did not his eye rule all things and intend
 The least of our concerns, (since from the least
 The greatest oft originate,) could chance
 Find place in his dominion, or dispose
 One lawless particle to thwart his plan,
 Then God might be surprised, and unforeseen
 Contingence might alarm him and disturb
 The smooth and equal course of his affairs.
 This truth Philosophy, though eagle-eyed
 In nature's tendencies, oft overlooks,
 And, having found his instrument, forgets
 Or disregards, or, more presumptuous still,
 Denies, the power that wills it. God proclaims
 His hot displeasure against foolish men
 That live an atheist life : involves the heaven
 In tempests ; quits his grasp upon the winds,
 And gives them all their fury ; bids a plague
 Kindle a fiery boil upon the skin,
 And putrefy the breath of blooming health.
 He calls for famine, and the meagre fiend
 Blows mildew from between his shrivelled lips,
 And taints the golden ear. He springs his mines,
 And desolates a nation at a blast.
 Forth steps the spruce philosopher and tells
 Of homogeneal and discordant springs
 And principles ; of causes, how they work
 By necessary laws their sure effects ;
 Of action and reaction. He has found
 The source of the disease that nature feels,
 And bids the world take heart and banish fear.
 Thou fool ! will thy discovery of the cause
 Suspend the effect, or heal it ? Has not God
 Still wrought by means since first he made the world,
 And did he not of old employ his means

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To drown it? What is his creation less
Than a capacious reservoir of means
Formed for his use, and ready at his will?
Go, dress thine eyes with eye-salve, ask of him,
Or ask of whomsoever he has taught,
And learn, though late, the genuine cause of all.

England, ~~with all thy faults~~, I love thee still,
My country! and, while yet a nook is left
Where English minds and manners may be found,
Shall be constrained to love thee. Though thy clime
Be fickle, and thy year most part deformed
With dripping rains or withered by a frost,
I would not yet exchange thy sullen skies
And fields without a flower for warmer France
With all her vines; nor for Ausonia's groves
Of golden fruitage, and her myrtle bowers.
To shake thy senate and from heights sublime
Of patriot eloquence to flash down fire
Upon thy foes, was never meant my task;
But I can feel thy fortunes and partake
Thy joys and sorrows with as true a heart
As any thunderer there. And I can feel
Thy follies too, and with a just disdain
Frown at effeminate whose very looks
Reflect dishonour on the land I love.

How, in the name of soldiership and sense,
Should England prosper when such things, as smooth
And tender as a girl, all-essenced o'er
With odours, and as profligate as sweet,
Who sell their laurel for a myrtle wreath,
And love when they should fight,—when such as these
Presume to lay their hand upon the ark
Of her magnificent and awful cause?

Time was when it was praise and boast enough
In every clime, and travel where we might,
That we were born her children; praise enough
To fill the ambition of a private man,
That Chatham's language was his mother tongue,
And Wolfe's great name compatriot with his own.
Farewell those honours, and farewell with them
The hope of such hereafter! They have fallen
Each in his field of glory; one in arms,
And one in council; Wolfe upon the lap
Of smiling victory that moment won,
And Chatham, heart-sick of his country's shame.
They made us many soldiers. Chatham, still
Consulting England's happiness at home

Secured it by an unforgiving frown
 If any wronged her. Wolfe, where'er he fought,
 Put so much of his heart into his act
 That his example had a magnet's force 250
 And all were swift to follow whom all loved.
 Those suns are set. Oh rise some other such !
 Or all that we have left is empty talk
 Of old achievements, and despair of new.

Now hoist the sail, and let the streamers float
 Upon the wanton breezes. Strew the deck
 With lavender, and sprinkle liquid sweets,
 That no rude savour maritime invade
 The nose of nice nobility. Breathe soft,
 Ye clarionets, and softer still, ye flutes, 260
 That winds and waters lulled by magic sounds
 May bear us smoothly to the Gallic shore.
 True, ~~we have lost an empire—~~let it pass.
 True, we may thank the perfidy of France
 That picked the jewel out of England's crown,
 With all the cunning of an envious shrew.

And let that pass,—'twas but a trick of state ;
 A brave man knows no malice, but at once
 Forgets in peace the injuries of war,
 And gives his direst foe a friend's embrace. 270
 And shamed as we have been, to the very beard
 Braved and defied, and in our own sea proved
 Too weak for those decisive blows that once
 Ensured us mastery there, we yet retain
 Some small pre-eminence ; we justly boast
 At least superior jockeyship, and claim
 The honours of the turf as all our own.

Go then, well worthy of the praise ye seek,
 And show the shame ye might conceal at home,
 In foreign eyes !—be grooms, and win the plate, 280
 Where once your nobler fathers won a crown !—

'Tis generous to communicate your skill
 To those that need it. Folly is soon learned :

And under such preceptors who can fail ?

There is a pleasure in poetic pains
 Which only poets know. The shifts and turns,
 The expedients and inventions multiform
 To which the mind resorts in chase of terms
 Though apt, yet coy, and difficult to win,
 To arrest the fleeting images that fill 290
 The mirror of the mind, and hold them fast,
 And force them sit, till he has pencilled off
 A faithful likeness of the forms he views ;

Then to dispose his copies with such art
 That each may find its most propitious light,
 And shine by situation hardly less
 Than by the labour and the skill it cost,
 Are occupations of the poet's mind
 So pleasing, and that steal away the thought
 With such address from themes of sad import, 300
 That, lost in his own musings, happy man!
 He feels the anxieties of life, denied
 Their wonted entertainment, all retire.
 Such joys has he that sings. But ah! not such,
 Or seldom such, the hearers of his song.

Fastidious, or else listless, or perhaps
 Aware of nothing arduous in a task
 They never undertook, they little note
 His dangers or escapes, and haply find
 Their least amusement where he found the most. 310

But is amusement all? Studios of song,
 And yet ambitious not to sing in vain,
 I would not trifle merely, though the world
 Be loudest in their praise who do no more.
 Yet what can satire, whether grave or gay?
 It may correct a foible, may chastise
 The freaks of fashion, regulate the dress,
 Retrench a sword-blade, or displace a patch;
 But where are its sublimer trophies found?
 What vice has it subdued? whose heart reclaimed 320
 By rigour, or whom laughed into reform?
 Alas! Leviathan is not so tamed.

Laughed at, he laughs again; and, stricken hard,
 Turns to the stroke his adamantine scales,
 That fear no discipline of human hands.
 The pulpit, therefore, (and I name it filled
 With solemn awe, that bids me well beware
 With what intent I touch that holy thing)—
 The pulpit (when the satirist has at last,
 Strutting and vapouring in an empty school, 330
 Spent all his force, and made no proselyte)—

I say the pulpit (in the sober use
 Of its legitimate, peculiar powers)
 Must stand acknowledged, while the world shall stand,
 The most important and effectual guard,
 Support, and ornament of virtue's cause.
 There stands the messenger of truth. There stands
 The legate of the skies; his theme divine,
 His office sacred, his credentials clear.
 By him, the violated law speaks out 340

Its thunders, and by him, in strains as sweet
 As angels use, the gospel whispers peace.
 He 'stablishes the strong, restores the weak,
 Reclaims the wanderer, binds the broken heart,
 And, armed himself in panoply complete
 Of heavenly temper, furnishes with arms
 Bright as his own, and trains, by every rule
 Of holy discipline, to glorious war,
 The sacramental host of God's elect.
 Are all such teachers? Would to Heaven all were ! 350
 But hark,—the Doctor's voice !—fast wedged between
 Two empirics he stands, and with swoln cheeks
 Inspires the news, his trumpet. Keener far
 Than all invective is his bold harangue,
 While through that public organ of report
 He hails the clergy ; and, defying shame,
 Announces to the world his own and theirs.
 He teaches those to read whom schools dismissed,
 And colleges, untaught ; sells accent, tone,
 And emphasis in score, and gives to prayer 360
 The *adagio* and *andante* it demands.
 He grinds divinity of other days
 Down into modern use ; transforms old print
 To zigzag manuscript, and cheats the eyes
 Of gallery critics by a thousand arts.
 Are there who purchase of the Doctor's ware ?
 Oh name it not in Gath !—It cannot be
 That grave and learned Clerks should need such aid.
 He doubtless is in sport, and does but droll,
 Assuming thus a rank unknown before— 370
 Grand caterer and dry-nurse of the church.
 I venerate the man whose heart is warm,
 Whose hands are pure, whose doctrine and whose life
 Coincident exhibit lucid proof
 That he is honest in the sacred cause.
 To such I render more than mere respect
 Whose actions say that they respect themselves.
 But loose in morals and in manners vain,
 In conversation frivolous, in dress
 Extreme, at once rapacious and profuse, 380
 Frequent in park, with lady at his side,
 Ambling and prattling scandal as he goes,
 But rare at home, and never at his books,
 Or with his pen, save when he scrawls a card ;
 Constant at routs, familiar with a round
 Of ladyships, a stranger to the poor ;
 Ambitious of preferment for its gold,

And well prepared by ignorance and sloth,
 By infidelity and love o' the world,
 To make God's work a sinecure ; a slave 390
 To his own pleasures and his patron's pride :—
 From such apostles, O ye mitred heads,
 Preserve the church ! and lay not careless hands
 On skulls that cannot teach, and will not learn.

Would I describe a preacher, such as Paul,
 Were he on earth, would hear, approve, and own,
 Paul should himself direct me. I would trace
 His master-strokes, and draw from his design.
 I would express him simple, grave, sincere ;
 In doctrine uncorrupt ; in language plain, 400
 And plain in manner ; decent, solemn, chaste,
 And natural in gesture ; much impressed
 Himself, as conscious of his awful charge,
 And anxious mainly that the flock he feeds
 May feel it too ; affectionate in look,
 And tender in address, as well becomes
 A messenger of grace to guilty men.
 Behold the picture ! Is it like ?—Like whom ?
 The things that mount the rostrum with a skip,
 And then skip down again ; pronounce a text, 410
 Cry—hem ; and, reading what they never wrote,
 Just fifteen minutes, huddle up their work,
 And with a well-bred whisper close the scene !

In man or woman, but far most in man,
 And most of all in man that ministers
 And serves the altar, in my soul I loathe
 All affectation. 'Tis my perfect scorn ;
 Object of my implacable disgust.
 What !—will a man play tricks, will he indulge 420
 A silly fond conceit of his fair form
 And just proportion, fashionable mien
 And pretty face, in presence of his God ?
 Or will he seek to dazzle me with tropes,
 As with the diamond on his lily hand,
 And play his brilliant parts before my eyes
 When I am hungry for the bread of life ?
 He mocks his Maker, prostitutes and shames
 His noble office, and, instead of truth
 Displaying his own beauty, starves his flock.
 Therefore, avaunt all attitude and stare 430
 And start theatric, practised at the glass.
 I seek divine simplicity in him
 Who handles things divine ; and all beside,
 Though learned with labour, and though much admired

By curious eyes and judgments ill informed,
 To me is odious as the nasal twang
 Heard at conventicle, where worthy men,
 Misled by custom, strain celestial themes
 Through the pressed nostril, spectacle-bestrid.
 Some, decent in demeanour while they preach, 440
 That task performed relapse into themselves,
 And, having spoken wisely, at the close
 Grow wanton, and give proof to every eye,
 Whoe'er was edified, themselves were not.
 Forth comes the pocket mirror. First we stroke
 An eyebrow ; next compose a straggling lock ;
 Then with an air most gracefully performed
 Fall back into our seat, extend an arm,
 And lay it at its ease with gentle care,
 With handkerchief in hand, depending low. 450
 The better hand, more busy, gives the nose
 Its bergamot, or aids the indebted eye
 With opera-glass to watch the moving scene,
 And recognise the slow-retiring fair.
 Now this is fulsome, and offends me more
 Than in a churchman slovenly neglect
 And rustic coarseness would. A heavenly mind
 May be indifferent to her house of clay,
 And slight the hovel as beneath her care ;
 But how a body so fantastic, trim, 460
 And quaint in its deportment and attire,
 Can lodge a heavenly mind—demands a doubt.
 He that negotiates between God and man,
 As God's ambassador, the grand concerns
 Of judgment and of mercy, should beware
 Of lightness in his speech. 'Tis pitiful
 To court a grin when you should woo a soul ;
 To break a jest when pity would inspire
 Pathetic exhortation ; and to address
 The skittish fancy with facetious tales 470
 When sent with God's commission to the heart.
 So did not Paul. Direct me to a quip
 Or merry turn in all he ever wrote,
 And I consent you take it for your text,
 Your only one, till sides and benches fail.
 No : he was serious in a serious cause,
 And understood too well the weighty terms
 That he had ta'en in charge. He would not stoop
 To conquer those by jocular exploits
 Whom truth and soberness assailed in vain. 480
 Oh, popular applause ! what heart of man

Is proof against thy sweet seducing charms ?
 The wisest and the best feel urgent need
 Of all their caution in thy gentlest gales ;
 But swelled into a gust—who then, alas !
 With all his canvas set, and inexperienced,
 And therefore heedless, can withstand thy power ?
 Praise from the rivelled lips of toothless bald
 Decrepitude, and in the looks of lean
 And craving poverty, and in the bow 490
 Respectful of the smutched artificer,
 Is oft too welcome, and may much disturb
 The bias of the purpose ; how much more
 Poured forth by beauty splendid and polite,
 In language soft as adoration breathes ?
 Ah, spare your idol ! think him human still ;
 Charms he may have, but he has frailties too ;
 Dote not too much, nor spoil what ye admire.

All truth is from the sempiternal source
 Of light divine. But Egypt, Greece, and Rome 500
 Drew from the stream below. More favoured, we
 Drink, when we choose it, at the fountain-head.
 To them it flowed much mingled and defiled
 With hurtful error, prejudice, and dreams
 Illusive of philosophy, so called,
 But falsely. Sages after sages strove
 In vain to filter off a crystal draught
 Pure from the lees, which often more enhanced
 The thirst than slaked it, and not seldom bred
 Intoxication and delirium wild. 510
 In vain they pushed inquiry to the birth
 And spring-time of the world ; asked, Whence is man ?
 Why formed at all ? And wherefore as he is ?
 Where must he find his Maker ? With what rites
 Adore him ? Will he hear, accept, and bless ?
 Or does he sit regardless of his works ?
 Has man within him an immortal seed ?
 Or does the tomb take all ? If he survive
 His ashes, where ? and in what weal or woe ?
 Knots worthy of solution, which alone 520
 A Deity could solve. Their answers vague
 And all at random, fabulous and dark,
 Left them as dark themselves. Their rules of life
 Defective and unsanctioned, proved too weak
 To bind the roving appetite, and lead
 Blind nature to a God not yet revealed.
 'Tis revelation satisfies all doubts,
 Explains all mysteries except her own,

And so illuminates the path of life
 That fools discover it and stray no more. 530
 Now tell me, dignified and sapient sir,
 My man of morals, nurtured in the shades
 Of Academus, is this false or true?
 Is Christ the abler teacher, or the schools?
 If Christ, then why resort at every turn
 To Athens or to Rome, for wisdom short
 Of man's occasions, when in Him reside
 Grace, knowledge, comfort, an unfathomed store?
 How oft, when Paul has served us with a text,
 Has Epictetus, Plato, Tully, preached! 540
 Men that, if now alive, would sit content
 And humble learners of a Saviour's worth,
 Preach it who might; such was their love of truth,
 Their thirst of knowledge, and their candour too.

And thus it is. The pastor, either vain
 By nature, or by flattery made so, taught
 To gaze at his own splendour, and to exalt
 Absurdly, not his office, but himself,
 Or unenlightened and too proud to learn,
 Or vicious and not therefore apt to teach, 550
 Perverting often by the stress of lewd
 And loose example whom he should instruct,
 Exposes and holds up to broad disgrace
 The noblest function, and discredits much
 The brightest truths that man has ever seen.
 For ghostly counsel, if it either fall
 Below the exigence, or be not backed
 With show of love, at least with hopeful proof
 Of some sincerity on the giver's part;
 Or be dishonoured in the exterior form 560
 And mode of its conveyance by such tricks
 As move derision, or by foppish airs
 And histrionic mummary that let down
 The pulpit to the level of the stage,
 Drops from the lips a disregarded thing.
 The weak perhaps are moved, but are not taught,
 While prejudice in men of stronger minds
 Takes deeper root, confirmed by what they see.
 A relaxation of religion's hold
 Upon the roving and untutored heart 570
 Soon follows, and, the curb of conscience snapped,
 The laity run wild.—But do they now?
 Note their extravagance, and be convinced.

As nations ignorant of God contrive
 A wooden one, so we, no longer taught

By monitors that mother church supplies,
 Now make our own. Posterity will ask
 (If e'er posterity see verse of mine)
 Some fifty or a hundred lustrums hence,
 What was a monitor in George's days? 580
 My very gentle reader yet unborn,
 Of whom I needs must augur better things
 Since Heaven would sure grow weary of a world
 Productive only of a race like us,
 A monitor is wood—plank shaven thin.
 We wear it at our backs. There closely braced
 And neatly fitted, it compresses hard
 The prominent and most unsightly bones,
 And binds the shoulders flat. We prove its use
 Sovereign and most effectual to secure 590
 A form not now gymnastic as of yore
 From rickets and distortion else our lot.
 But thus admonished we can walk erect,
 One proof at least of manhood; while the friend
 Sticks close, a Mentor worthy of his charge.
 Our habits, costlier than Lucullus wore,
 And by caprice as multiplied as his,
 Just please us while the fashion is at full,
 But change with every moon. The sycophant
 That waits to dress us arbitrates their date; 600
 Surveys his fair reversion with keen eye;
 Finds one ill made, another obsolete,
 This fits not nicely, that is ill conceived;
 And, making prize of all that he condemns,
 With our expenditure defrays his own.
 Variety's the very spice of life,
 That gives it all its flavour. We have run
 Through every change that fancy, at the loom
 Exhausted, has had genius to supply;
 And, studious of mutation still, discard 610
 A real elegance a little used,
 For monstrous novelty and strange disguise.
 We sacrifice to dress till household joys
 And comforts cease. Dress drains our cellar dry,
 And keeps our larder lean; puts out our fires,
 And introduces hunger, frost, and woe,
 Where peace and hospitality might reign.
 What man that lives, and that knows how to live,
 Would fail to exhibit at the public shows
 A form as splendid as the proudest there, 620
 Though appetite raise outcries at the cost?
 A man o' the town dines late, but soon enough,

With reasonable forecast and dispatch,
 To ensure a side-box station at half-price.
 You think, perhaps, so delicate his dress,
 His daily fare as delicate. Alas !
 He picks clean teeth, and, busy as he seems
 With an old tavern quill, is hungry yet.
 The rout is folly's circle, which she draws
 With magic wand. So potent is the spell 630
 That none decoyed into that fatal ring,
 Unless by Heaven's peculiar grace, escape.
 There we grow early grey, but never wise ;
 There form connexions, and acquire no friend ;
 Solicit pleasure, hopeless of success ;
 Waste youth in occupations only fit
 For second childhood, and devote old age
 To sports which only childhood could excuse.
 There they are happiest who dissemble best
 Their weariness ; and they the most polite 640
 Who squander time and treasure with a smile,
 Though at their own destruction. She that asks
 Her dear five hundred friends contemns them all
 And hates their coming. They (what can they less ?)
 Make just reprisals, and with cringe and shrug,
 And bow obsequious, hide their hate of her.
 All catch the frenzy, downward from her Grace,
 Whose flambeaux flash against the morning skies
 And gild our chamber ceilings as they pass,
 To her who, frugal only that her thrift 650
 May feed excesses she can ill afford,
 Is hackneyed home unlackeyed ; who in haste
 Alighting turns the key in her own door,
 And, at the watchman's lantern borrowing light,
 Finds a cold bed her only comfort left.
 Wives beggar husbands, husbands starve their wives,
 On fortune's velvet altar offering up
 Their last poor pittance—fortune, most severe
 Of goddesses yet known, and costlier far
 Than all that held their routs in Juno's heaven ! 660
 So fare we in this prison-house the world.
 And 'tis a fearful spectacle to see
 So many maniacs dancing in their chains.
 They gaze upon the links that hold them fast
 With eyes of anguish, execrate their lot,
 Then shake them in despair, and dance again.
 Now basket up the family of plagues
 That waste our vitals ; peculation, sale
 Of honour, perjury, corruption, frauds

By forgery, by subterfuge of law, 670
By tricks and lies as numerous and as keen
As the necessities their authors feel ;
Then cast them, closely bundled, every brat
At the right door. Profusion is its sire.
Profusion unrestrained, with all that's base
In character has littered all the land,
And bred, within the memory of no few,
A priesthood such as Baal's was of old,
A people such as never was till now.
It is a hungry vice :—it eats up all 680
That gives society its beauty, strength,
Convenience, and security, and use :
Makes men mere vermin, worthy to be trapped
And gibbeted as fast as catchpole-claws
Can seize the slippery prey : unties the knot
Of union, and converts the sacred band
That holds mankind together to a scourge.
Profusion deluging a state with lusts
Of grossest nature and of worst effects,
Prepares it for its ruin : hardens, blinds, 690
And warps the consciences of public men
Till they can laugh at virtue ; mock the fools
That trust them ; and, in the end, disclose a face
That would have shocked credulity herself
Unmasked, vouchsafing this their sole excuse—
Since all alike are selfish, why not they ?
This does profusion, and the accursèd cause
Of such deep mischief has itself a cause.

In colleges and halls, in ancient days,
When learning, virtue, piety, and truth 700
Were precious, and inculcated with care,
There dwelt a sage called Discipline. His head,
Not yet by time completely silvered o'er,
Bespoke him past the bounds of freakish youth,
But strong for service still, and unimpaired.
His eye was meek and gentle, and a smile
Played on his lips, and in his speech was heard
Paternal sweetness, dignity, and love.
The occupation dearest to his heart
Was to encourage goodness. He would stroke 710
The head of modest and ingenuous worth
That blushed at its own praise ; and press the youth
Close to his side that pleased him. Learning grew
Beneath his care, a thriving vigorous plant ;
The mind was well informed, the passions held
Subordinate, and diligence was choice.

If e'er it chanced, as sometimes chance it must,
 That one among so many overleaped
 The limits of control, his gentle eye
 Grew stern, and darted a severe rebuke ; 720
 His frown was full of terror, and his voice
 Shook the delinquent with such fits of awe
 As left him not, till penitence had won
 Lost favour back again, and closed the breach.
 But Discipline, a faithful servant long,
 Declined at length into the vale of years ;
 A palsy struck his arm, his sparkling eye
 Was quenched in rheums of age, his voice unstrung
 Grew tremulous, and moved derision more
 Than reverence, in perverse rebellious youth. 730
 So colleges and halls neglected much
 Their good old friend, and Discipline at length,
 O'erlooked and unemployed, fell sick, and died.
 Then study languished, emulation slept,
 And virtue fled. The schools became a scene
 Of solemn farce, where ignorance in stilts,
 His cap well lined with logic not his own,
 With parrot-tongue performed the scholar's part,
 Proceeding soon a graduated dunce.
 Then compromise had place, and scrutiny 740
 Became stone blind, precedence went in truck,
 And he was competent whose purse was so.
 A dissolution of all bonds ensued :
 The curbs invented for the mulish mouth
 Of headstrong youth were broken ; bars and bolts
 Grew rusty by disuse, and massy gates
 Forgot their office, opening with a touch ;
 Till gowns at length are found mere masquerade ;
 The tasselled cap and the spruce band a jest,
 A mockery of the world. What need of these 750
 For gamesters, jockeys, brothellers impure,
 Spendthrifts and booted sportsmen, oftener seen
 With belted waist and pointers at their heels
 Than in the bounds of duty ? What was learned,
 If aught was learned in childhood, is forgot,
 And such expense as pinches parents blue,
 And mortifies the liberal hand of love,
 Is squandered in pursuit of idle sports
 And vicious pleasures ; buys the boy a name,
 That sits a stigma on his father's house, 760
 And cleaves through life inseparably close
 To him that wears it. What can after-games
 Of riper joys, and commerce with the world,

The lewd vain world that must receive him soon,
 Add to such erudition thus acquired,
 Where science and where virtue are professed?
 They may confirm his habits, rivet fast
 His folly, but to spoil him is a task
 That bids defiance to the united powers
 Of fashion, dissipation, taverns, stews.

770

Now, blame we most the nurslings or the nurse?
 The children crook'd and twisted and deformed
 Through want of care, or her whose winking eye
 And slumbering oscitancy mars the brood?
 The nurse no doubt. Regardless of her charge,
 She needs herself correction; needs to learn
 That it is dangerous sporting with the world,
 With things so sacred as a nation's trust,
 The nurture of her youth, her dearest pledge.

780

All are not such. I had a brother once—
 Peace to the memory of a man of worth,
 A man of letters, and of manners too;
 Of manners sweet as virtue always wears
 When gay good-nature dresses her in smiles.
 He graced a college,* in which order yet
 Was sacred; and was honoured, loved, and wept
 By more than one, themselves conspicuous there.
 Some minds are tempered happily, and mixed
 With such ingredients of good sense and taste
 Of what is excellent in man, they thirst
 With such a zeal to be what they approve,
 That no restraints can circumscribe them more
 Than they themselves by choice, for wisdom's sake.
 Nor can example hurt them; what they see
 Of vice in others but enhancing more
 The charms of virtue in their just esteem.
 If such escape contagion, and emerge
 Pure, from so foul a pool, to shine abroad,
 And give the world their talents and themselves,
 Small thanks to those whose negligence or sloth
 Exposed their inexperience to the snare,
 And left them to an undirected choice.

790

800

See then the quiver broken and decayed,
 In which are kept our arrows. Rusting there
 In wild disorder, and unfit for use,
 What wonder if, discharged into the world,
 They shame their shooters with a random flight,
 Their points obtuse, and feathers drunk with wine.
 Well may the church wage unsuccessful war,

* Benet College, Cambridge.

With such artillery armed. Vice parries wide 810
 The undreaded volley with a sword of straw,
 And stands an impudent and fearless mark.

Have we not tracked the felon home, and found
 His birthplace and his dam? The country mourns,
 Mourns, because every plague that can infest
 Society, and that saps and worms the base
 Of the edifice that policy has raised,
 Swarms in all quarters; meets the eye, the ear,
 And suffocates the breath at every turn.

Profusion breeds them. And the cause itself 820
 Of that calamitous mischief has been found:
 Found too where most offensive, in the skirts
 Of the robed pedagogue. Else, let the arraigned
 Stand up unconscious and refute the charge.

So when the Jewish leader stretched his arm,
 And waved his rod divine, a race obscene,
 Spawned in the muddy beds of Nile, came forth,
 Polluting Egypt. Gardens, fields, and plains
 Were covered with the pest. The streets were filled:
 The croaking nuisance lurked in every nook, 830
 Nor palaces nor even chambers 'scaped,
 And the land stank, so numerous was the fry.

BOOK III

THE GARDEN

ARGUMENT.—Self-recollection and reproof—Address to domestic happiness—
 Some account of myself—The vanity of many of their pursuits who are
 reputed wise—Justification of my censures—Divine illumination necessary to
 the most expert philosopher—The question, What is truth? answered by
 other questions—Domestic happiness addressed again—Few lovers of the
 country—My tame hare—Occupations of a retired gentleman in his garden
 —Pruning—Framing—Greenhouse—Sowing of flower-seeds—The country
 preferable to the town even in the winter—Reasons why it is deserted at that
 season—Ruinous effects of gaming, and of expensive improvement—Book
 concludes with an apostrophe to the metropolis.

AS one who, long in thickets and in brakes
 Entangled, winds now this way and now that
 His devious course uncertain, seeking home;
 Or having long in miry ways been foiled

And sore discomfited, from slough to slough
 Plunging, and half despairing of escape,
 If chance at length he finds a greensward smooth
 And faithful to the foot, his spirits rise,
 He chirrupsk brisk his ear-erecting steed,
 And winds his way with pleasure and with ease ; 10
 So I, designing other themes, and called
 To adorn the ~~Sofa~~ with eulogium due,
 To tell its slumbers and to paint its dreams,
 Have rambled wide : in country, city, seat
 Of academic fame (howe'er deserved),
~~Long held and scarcely disengaged at last.~~
 But now with pleasant pace a cleanlier road
 I mean to tread. I feel myself at large,
 Courageous, and refreshed for future toil,
 If toil awaits me, or if dangers new. 20

Since pulpits fail, and sounding-boards reflect
 Most part an empty ineffectual sound,
 What chance that I, to fame so little known,
 Nor conversant with men or manners much,
 Should speak to purpose, or with better hope
 Crack the satiric thong ? 'Twere wiser far
 For me, enamoured of sequestered scenes,
 And charmed with rural beauty, to repose
 Where chance may throw me, beneath elm or vine,
 My languid limbs when summer sears the plains, 30
 Or, when rough winter rages, on the soft
 And sheltered Sofa, while the nitrous air
 Feeds a blue flame, and makes a cheerful hearth ;
 There, undisturbed by folly, and apprised
 How great the danger of disturbing her,
 To muse in silence, or at least confine
 Remarks that gail so many to the few
 My partners in retreat. Disgust concealed
 Is oft-times proof of wisdom, when the fault
 Is obstinate, and cure beyond our reach. 40

Domestic happiness, thou only bliss
 Of Paradise that has survived the fall !
 Though few now taste thee unimpaired and pure,
 Or tasting long enjoy thee, too infirm
 Or too incautions to preserve thy sweets
 Unmixed with drops of bitter, which neglect
 Or temper sheds into thy crystal cup.
 Thou art the nurse of virtue. In thine arms
 She smiles, appearing, as in truth she is,
 Heaven-born, and destined to the skies again. 50
 Thou art not known where pleasure is adored,

That reeling goddess with the zoneless waist
 And wandering eyes, still leaning on the arm
 Of novelty, her fickle frail support;
 For thou art meek and constant, hating change,
 And finding in the calm of truth-tried love
 Joys that her stormy raptures never yield.
 Forsaking thee, what shipwreck have we made
 Of honour, dignity, and fair renown,
 Till prostitution elbows us aside 60
 In all our crowded streets, and senates seem
 Convened for purposes of empire less
 Than to release the adultress from her bond.
 The adultress! what a theme for angry verse!
 What provocation to the indignant heart
 That feels for injured love! but I disdain
 The nauseous task to paint her as she is,
 Cruel, abandoned, glorying in her shame.
 No. Let her pass, and charioted along
 In guilty splendour, shake the public ways; 70
 The frequency of crimes has washed them white;
 And verse of mine shall never brand the wretch,
 Whom matrons now, of character unsmirched,
 And chaste themselves, are not ashamed to own.
 Virtue and vice had boundaries in old time
 Not to be passed; and she that had renounced
 Her sex's honour, was renounced herself
 By all that prized it; not for prudery's sake,
 But dignity's, resentful of the wrong.
 'Twas hard perhaps on here and there a waif, 80
 Desirous to return, and not received;
 But was a wholesome rigour in the main,
 And taught the unblemished to preserve with care
 That purity, whose loss was loss of all.
 Men too were nice in honour in those days,
 And judged offenders well. Then he that sharpened,
 And pocketed a prize by fraud obtained,
 Was marked and shunned as odious. He that sold
 His country, or was slack when she required
 His every nerve in action and at stretch, 90
 Paid with the blood that he had basely spared
 The price of his default. But now—yes, now,
 We are become so candid and so fair,
 So liberal in construction, and so rich
 In Christian charity, (a good-natured age!)
 That they are safe, sinners of either sex,
 Transgress what laws they may. Well dressed, well bred,
 Well equipaged, is ticket good enough

To pass us readily through every door.
 Hypocrisy, detest her as we may,
 (And no man's hatred ever wronged her yet,)
 May claim this merit still—that she admits
 The worth of what she mimics with such care,
 And thus gives virtue indirect applause;
 But she has burned her mask, not needed here,
 Where vice has such allowance that her shifts
 And specious semblances have lost their use.

100

virtue

I was a stricken deer that left the herd
 Long since; ~~with many an arrow~~ deep infix'd
 My panting side was charged, when I withdrew
 To seek a tranquil death in distant shades.
 There was I found by One who had Himself
 Been hurt by the archers. In His side He bore,
 And in His hands and feet, the cruel scars.
 With gentle force soliciting the darts
 He drew them forth, and healed and bade me live.
 Since then, with few associates, in remote
 And silent woods I wander, far from those
 My former partners of the peopled scene;
 With few associates, and not wishing more.
 Here much I ruminate, as much I may,
 With other views of men and manners now
 Than once, and others of a life to come.
 I see that all ~~are~~ wanderers, gone astray
 Each in his own delusions; they are lost
 In chase of fancied happiness, still wooed
 And never won. Dream after dream ensues,
 And still they dream that they shall still succeed,
 And still are disappointed. Rings the world
 With the vain stir. I sum up half mankind,
 And add two-thirds of the remainder half,
 And find the total of their hopes and fears
 Dreams, empty dreams. The million flit as gay
 As if created only like the fly
 That spreads his motley wings in the eye of noon,
 To sport their season, and be seen no more.
 The rest are sober dreamers, grave and wise,
 And pregnant with discoveries new and rare.
 Some write a narrative of wars, and feats
 Of heroes little known, and call the rant
 A history: describe the man of whom
 His own coevals took but little note,
 And paint his person, character, and views,
 As they had known him from his mother's womb.
 They disentangle from the puzzled skein

110

120

130

140

*chest ...**the ...*

In which obscurity has wrapped them up,
 The threads of politic and shrewd design
 That ran through all his purposes, and charge
 His mind with meanings that he never had,
 Or having, kept concealed. Some drill and bore 150
 The solid earth, and from the strata there
 Extract a register, by which we learn
 ★ That He who made it, and revealed its date
 To Moses, was mistaken in its age.
 Some, more acute and more industrious still,
 Contrive creation; travel nature up
 To the sharp peak of her sublimest height,
 And tell us whence the stars; why some are fixed,
 And planetary some; what gave them first
 Rotation, from what fountain flowed their light. 160
 Great contest follows, and much learned dust
 Involves the combatants, each claiming truth,
 And truth disclaiming both: and thus they spend
 The little wick of life's poor shallow lamp
 In playing tricks with nature, giving laws
 To distant worlds, and trifling in their own.
 Is't not a pity now, that tickling rheums
 Should ever tease the lungs and blear the sight
 Of oracles like these? Great pity too,
 That having wielded the elements, and built 170
 A thousand systems, each in his own way,
 They should go out in fume and be forgot?
 Ah! what is life thus spent? and what are they
 But frantic who thus spend it? All for smoke,
 Eternity for bubbles, proves at last
 A senseless bargain. When I see such games
 Played by the creatures of a Power who swears
 That He will judge the earth, and call the fool
 To a sharp reckoning that has lived in vain;
 And when I weigh this seeming wisdom well, 180
 And prove it in the infallible result
 So hollow and so false—I feel my heart
 Dissolve in pity, and account the learn'd,
 If this be learning, most of all deceived.
 Great crimes alarm the conscience, but it sleeps
 While thoughtful man is plausibly amused,
 “Defend me therefore, common sense,” say I,
 “From reveries so airy, from the toil
 Of dropping buckets into empty wells,
 And growing old in drawing nothing up!” 190
 “’Twere well,” says one sage erudite, profound,
 Terribly arched and aquiline his nose,

And overbuilt with most impending brows—
 “’Twere well, could you permit the world to live
 As the world pleases. What’s the world to you?”
 Much. I was born of woman, and drew milk,
 As sweet as charity, from human breasts,
 I think, articulate, I laugh and weep,
 And exercise all functions of a man.

How then should I and any man that lives 200
 Be strangers to each other? Pierce my vein,
 Take of the crimson stream meandering there,
 And catechise it well. Apply thy glass,
 Search it, and prove now if it be not blood
 Congenial with thine own? and if it be,
 What edge of subtlety canst thou suppose
 Keen enough, wise and skilful as thou art,
 To cut the link of brotherhood, by which
 One common Maker bound me to the kind?

True, I am no proficient, I confess, 210
 In arts like yours. I cannot call the swift
 And perilous lightnings from the angry clouds;
 And bid them hide themselves in the earth beneath.

I cannot analyse the air, nor catch
 The parallax of yonder luminous point
 That seems half quenched in the immense abyss.
 Such powers I boast not; neither can I rest

A silent witness of the headlong rage
 Or heedless folly by which thousands die,
 Bone of my bone, and kindred souls to mine.) 220

God never meant that man should scale the heavens.
 By strides of human wisdom. In his works
 Though wondrous, he commands us in his word
 To seek him rather where his mercy shines.

The mind indeed, enlightened from above,
 Views him in all; ascribes to the grand cause
 The grand effect; acknowledges with joy
 His manner, and with rapture tastes his style.

But never yet did philosophic tube,
 That brings the planets home into the eye 230
 Of observation, and discovers, else

Not visible, his family of worlds,
 Discover him that rules them; such a veil
 Hangs over mortal eyes, blind from the birth,
 And dark in things divine. Full often too
 Our wayward intellect, the more we learn
 Of nature, overlooks her Author more,
 From instrumental causes proud to draw
 Conclusions retrograde and mad mistake.

But if his word once teach us, shoot a ray
 Through all the heart's dark chambers, and reveal
 Truths undiscerned but by that holy light,
 Then all is plain. Philosophy baptized
 In the pure fountain of eternal love
 Has eyes indeed; and, viewing all she sees
 As meant to indicate a God to man,
 Gives *him* his praise, and forfeits not her own.
 Learning has borne such fruit in other days
 On all her branches: piety has found
 Friends in the friends of science, and true prayer
 Has flowed from lips wet with Castalian dews.
 Such was thy wisdom, Newton, childlike sage!
 Sagacious reader of the works of God,
 And in his word sagacious. Such too thine,
 Milton, whose genius had angelic wings,
 And fed on manna. And such thine, in whom
 Our British Themis gloried with just cause,
 Immortal Hale! for deep discernment praised
 And sound integrity, not more than famed
 For sanctity of manners undefiled.

240

250

260

All flesh is grass, and all its glory fades
 Like the fair flower dishevelled in the wind;
 Riches have wings, and grandeur is a dream;
 The man we celebrate must find a tomb,
 And we that worship him ignoble graves.
 Nothing is proof against the general curse
 Of vanity that seizes all below.

The only amaranthine flower on earth
 Is virtue; the only lasting treasure, truth.
 But what is truth? 'Twas Pilate's question put
 To Truth itself, that deigned him no reply.
 And wherefore? will not God impart his light
 To them that ask it?—Freely; 'tis his joy,
 His glory and his nature to impart.
 But to the proud, uncandid, insincere,
 Or negligent inquirer, not a spark.
 What's that which brings contempt upon a book
 And him that writes it, though the style be neat,
 The method clear, the argument exact?
 That makes a minister in holy things
 The joy of many, and the dread of more,
 His name a theme for praise and for reproach?
 That while it gives us worth in God's account
 Depreciates and undoes us in our own?
 What pearl is it that rich men cannot buy,
 That learning is too proud to gather up,

270

280

But which the poor and the despised of all
Seek and obtain, and often find unsought?
Tell me, and I will tell thee what is truth.

Oh friendly to the best pursuits of man, 290
Friendly to thought, to virtue, and to peace,
Domestic life in rural leisure passed!
Few know thy value; and few taste thy sweets,
Though many boast thy favours, and affect
To understand and choose thee for their own.
But foolish man forgoes his proper bliss,
Even as his first progenitor, and quits,
Though placed in Paradise, (for earth has still
Some traces of her youthful beauty left,) } No
Substantial happiness for transient joy. 300
Scenes formed for contemplation, and to nurse
The growing seeds of wisdom; that suggest,
By every pleasing image they present,
Reflections such as meliorate the heart,
Compose the passions, and exalt the mind;
Scenes such as these, 'tis his supreme delight
To fill with riot and defile with blood.
Should some contagion, kind to the poor brutes
We persecute, annihilate the tribes
That draw the sportsman over hill and dale 310
Fearless, and rapt away from all his cares;
Should never game-fowl hatch her eggs again,
Nor baited hook deceive the fish's eye;
Could pageantry and dance, and feast and song,
Be quelled in all our summer-month retreats;
How many self-deluded nymphs and swains,
Who dream they have a taste for fields and groves,
Would find them hideous nurseries of the spleen,
And crowd the roads, impatient for the town!
They love the country, and none else, who seek 320
For their own sake its silence and its shade;
Delights which who would leave, that has a heart
Susceptible of pity, or a mind
Cultured and capable of sober thought,
For all the savage din of the swift pack,
And clamours of the field? Detested sport,
That owes its pleasures to another's pain,
That feeds upon the sobs and dying shrieks
Of harmless nature, dumb, but yet endued
With eloquence that agonies inspire, 330
Of silent tears and heart-distending sighs!
Vain tears, alas! and sighs that never find
A corresponding tone in jovial souls.

Well,—one at least is safe. One sheltered here
 Has never heard the sanguinary yell
 Of cruel man exulting in her woes.
 Innocent partner of my peaceful home,
 Whom ten long years' experience of my care
 Has made at last familiar, she has lost
 Much of her vigilant instinctive dread, 340
 Not needful here, beneath a roof like mine.
 Yes,—~~thou~~ mayst eat thy bread, and lick the hand
 That feeds thee; ~~thou mayst frolic~~ on the floor
 At evening, and at night retire secure
 To thy straw couch, and slumber unalarmed :
 For I have gained thy confidence, have pledged
 All that is human in me to protect
 Thine unsuspecting gratitude and love.
 If I survive thee I will dig thy grave ;
 And, when I place thee in it, sighing say, 350
 I knew at least one here that had a friend.

How various his employments whom the world
 Calls idle, and who justly in return
 Esteems that busy world an idler too !
 Friends, books, a garden, and perhaps his pen,
 Delightful industry enjoyed at home,
 And nature, in her cultivated trim
 Dressed to his taste, inviting him abroad—
 Can he want occupation who has these ?
 Will he be idle who has much to enjoy ? 360
~~Me, therefore, studious of laborious ease,~~
~~Not slothful, happy to deceive the time,~~
~~Not waste it, and aware that human life~~
~~Is but a loan to be repaid with use,~~
 When he shall call his debtors to account,
 From whom are all our blessings, business finds
 Even here; while sedulous I seek to improve,
 At least neglect not or leave unemployed,
 The mind he gave me; driving it, though slack
 Too oft, and much impeded in its work 370
 By causes not to be divulged in vain,
 To its just point—the service of mankind.
 He that attends to his interior self,—
 That has a heart and keeps it,—has a mind
 That hungers and supplies it,—and who seeks
 A social, not a dissipated life,—
 Has business; feels himself engaged to achieve
 No unimportant, though a silent task.
 A life all turbulence and noise may seem
 To him that leads it wise and to be praised ; 380

But wisdom is a pearl with most success
~~Sought in still water and beneath clear skies.~~
He that is ever occupied in storms
Or dives not for it or brings up instead,
Vainly industrious, a disgraceful prize.

~~The morning finds the self-sequestered man
Fresh for his task, intend what task he may.~~

Whether inclement seasons recommend
His warm but simple home, where he enjoys,
With her who shares his pleasures and his heart,
Sweet converse, sipping calm the fragrant lymph
Which neatly she prepares; then to his book
Well chosen, and not sullenly perused
In selfish silence, but imparted oft
As aught occurs that she may smile to hear,
Or turn to nourishment digested well.

390

Or if the garden with its many cares,
All well repaid, demand him, he attends
The welcome call, conscious how much the hand
Of lubbard labour needs his watchful eye,
Oft loitering lazily if not o'erseen,
Or misapplying his unskilful strength.

400

Nor does he govern only or direct,
But much performs himself. No works indeed
That ask robust tough sinews bred to toil,
Servile employ; but such as may amuse,
Not tire, demanding rather skill than force.
Proud of his well-spread walls, he views his trees
That meet, no barren interval between,
With pleasure more than even their fruits afford,
Which, save himself who trains them, none can feel.

410

These therefore are his own peculiar charge;
No meaner hand may discipline the shoots,
None but his steel approach them. What is weak,
Distempered, or has lost prolific powers,
Impaired by age, his unrelenting hand
Dooms to the knife: nor does he spare the soft
And succulent, that feeds its giant growth
But barren, at the expense of neighbouring twigs
Less ostentatious, and yet studded thick
With hopeful gems. The rest, no portion left
That may disgrace his art, or disappoint
Large expectation, he disposes neat
At measured distances, that air and sun,
Admitted freely, may afford their aid,
And ventilate and warm the swelling buds.
Hence summer has her riches, autumn hence,

420

And hence even winter fills his withered hand
 With blushing fruits, and plenty not his own.*
 Fair recompense of labour well bestowed, 430
 And wise precaution which a clime so rude
 Makes needful still, whose spring is but the child
 Of churlish winter, in her froward moods
 Discovering much the temper of her sire.
 For oft, as if in her the stream of mild
 Maternal nature had reversed its course,
 She brings her infants forth with many smiles,
 But once delivered kills them with a frown.
 He therefore, timely warned, himself supplies
 Her want of care, screening and keeping warm 440
 The plenteous bloom, that no rough blast may sweep
 His garlands from the boughs. Again, as oft
 As the sun peeps and vernal airs breathe mild,
 The fence withdrawn, he gives them every beam,
 And spreads his hopes before the blaze of day.

To raise the prickly and green-coated gourd,
 So grateful to the palate, and when rare
 So coveted, else base and disesteemed,—
 Food for the vulgar merely,—is an art
 That toiling ages have but just matured, 450
 And at this moment unassayed in song.
 Yet gnats have had, and frogs and mice, long since
 Their eulogy; those sang the Mantuan bard,
 And these the Grecian, in ennobling strains;
 And in thy numbers, Philips, shines for aye
 The solitary Shilling. Pardon then,
 Ye sage dispensers of poetic fame,
 The ambition of one meaner far, whose powers,
 Presuming an attempt not less sublime,
 Pant for the praise of dressing to the taste 460
 Of critic appetite, no sordid fare,
 A cucumber, while costly yet and scarce.

The stable yields a stercorarious heap
 Impregnated with quick fermenting salts,
 And potent to resist the freezing blast:
 For ere the beech and elm have cast their leaf
 Deciduous, and when now November dark
 Checks vegetation in the torpid plant
 Exposed to his cold breath, the task begins.
 Warily therefore, and with prudent heed, 470
 He seeks a favoured spot; that where he builds
 The agglomerated pile, his frame may front
 The sun's meridian disk, and at the back

* "Miraturque novos fructus et non sua poma."—VIRG.

Enjoy close shelter, wall, or reeds, or hedge
 Impervious to the wind. First he bids spread
 Dry fern or littered hay, that may imbibe
 The ascending damps ; then leisurely impose,
 And lightly, shaking it with agile hand
 From the full fork, the saturated straw.
 What longest binds the closest forms secure 480
 The shapely side, that as it rises takes,
 By just degrees, an overhanging breadth,
 Sheltering the base with its projected eaves.
 The uplifted frame, compact at every joint,
 And overlaid with clear translucent glass,
 He settles next upon the sloping mount,
 Whose sharp declivity shoots off secure
 From the dashed pane the deluge as it falls :
 He shuts it close, and the first labour ends.
 Thrice must the voluble and restless earth 490
 Spin round upon her axle, ere the warmth,
 Slow gathering in the midst, through the square mass
 Diffused, attain the surface : when, behold,
 A pestilent and most corrosive steam,
 Like a gross bog Bœotian, rising fast,
 And fast condensed upon the dewy sash,
 Asks egress ; which obtained, the overcharged
 And drenched conservatory breathes abroad,
 In volumes wheeling slow, the vapour dank,
 And purified rejoices to have lost 500
 Its foul inhabitant. But to assuage
 The impatient fervour which it first conceives
 Within its reeking bosom, threatening death
 To his young hopes, requires discreet delay.
 Experience, slow preceptress, teaching oft
 The way to glory by miscarriage foul,
 Must prompt him, and admonish how to catch
 The auspicious moment, when the tempered heat,
 Friendly to vital motion, may afford
 Soft fermentation, and invite the seed. 510
 The seed, selected wisely, plump, and smooth,
 And glossy, he commits to pots of size
 Diminutive, well filled with well-prepared
 And fruitful soil that has been treasured long,
 And drunk no moisture from the dripping clouds :
 These on the warm and genial earth that hides
 The smoking manure and o'erspreads it all,
 He places lightly, and, as time subdues
 The rage of fermentation, plunges deep
 In the soft medium, till they stand immersed. 520

Then rise the tender germs, upstarting quick
 And spreading wide their spongy lobes, at first
 Pale, wan, and livid, but assuming soon,
 If fanned by balmy and nutritious air
 Strained through the friendly mats, a vivid green.
 Two leaves produced, two rough indented leaves,
 Cautious he pinches from the second stalk
 A pimple that portends a future sprout,
 And interdicts its growth. Thence straight succeed
 The branches, sturdy to his utmost wish, 530
 Prolific all, and harbingers of more.

The crowded roots demand enlargement now,
 And transplantation in an ampler space.
 Indulged in what they wish, they soon supply
 Large foliage, overshadowing golden flowers,
 Blown on the summit of the apparent fruit.
 These have their sexes, and, when summer shines,
 The bee transports the fertilizing meal
 From flower to flower, and even the breathing air
 Wafts the rich prize to its appointed use. 540
 Not so when winter scowls. Assistant art
 Then acts in nature's office, brings to pass
 The glad espousals, and ensures the crop.

Grudge not, ye rich, (since luxury must have
 His dainties, and the world's more numerous half
 Lives by contriving delicacies for you,)
 Grudge not the cost. Ye little know the cares,
 The vigilance, the labour, and the skill
 That day and night are exercised, and hang
 Upon the ticklish balance of suspense, 550
 That ye may garnish your profuse regales
 With summer fruits brought forth by wintry suns.
 Ten thousand dangers lie in wait to thwart
 The process. Heat and cold, and wind and steam,
 Moisture and drought, mice, worms, and swarming flies,
 Minute as dust and numberless, oft work
 Dire disappointment that admits no cure,
 And which no care can obviate. It were long,
 Too long, to tell the expedients and the shifts
 Which he that fights a season so severe 560
 Devises, while he guards his tender trust,
 And oft at last in vain. The learn'd and wise,
 Sarcastic, would exclaim, and judge the song
 Cold as its theme, and, like its theme, the fruit
 Of too much labour, worthless when produced.

Who loves a garden loves a greenhouse too.
 Unconscious of a less propitious clime,

There blooms exotic beauty, warm and snug,
While the winds whistle and the snows descend.
The spiry myrtle with unwithering leaf
Shines there and flourishes. The golden boast
Of Portugal and western India there,
The ruddier orange and the paler lime,
Peep through their polished foliage at the storm,
And seem to smile at what they need not fear.
The amomum there with intermingling flowers
And cherries hangs her twigs. Geranium boasts
Her crimson honours, and the spangled beau,
Ficoides, glitters bright the winter long.
All plants, of every leaf that can endure
The winter's frown if screened from his shrewd bite
Live there and prosper. Those Ausonia claims,
Levantine regions these ; the Azores send
Their jessamine, her jessamine remote
Caffraria : foreigners from many lands,
They form one social shade, as if convened
By magic summons of the Orphean lyre.
Yet just arrangement, rarely brought to pass
But by a master's hand, disposing well
The gay diversities of leaf and flower,
Must lend its aid to illustrate all their charms,
And dress the regular yet various scene.
Plant behind plant aspiring, in the van
The dwarfish, in the rear retired, but still
Sublime above the rest, the statelier stand.
So once were ranged the sons of ancient Rome,
A noble show ! while Roscius trod the stage ;
And so, while Garrick as renowned as he,
The sons of Albion, fearing each to lose
Some note of Nature's music from his lips,
And covetous of Shakspeare's beauty seen
In every flash of his far-beaming eye.
Nor taste alone and well-contrived display
Suffice to give the marshalled ranks the grace
Of their complete effect. Much yet remains
Unsung, and many cares are yet behind,
And more laborious ; cares on which depends
Their vigour, injured soon, not soon restored.
The soil must be renewed, which, often washed,
Loses its treasure of salubrious salts,
And disappoints the roots ; the slender roots
Close interwoven, where they meet the vase
Must smooth be shorn away ; the sapless branch
Must fly before the knife : the withered leaf

Must be detached, and where it strews the floor
Swept with a woman's neatness, breeding else
Contagion, and disseminating death.

Discharge but these kind offices, (and who
Would spare, that loves them, offices like these ?)
Well they reward the toil. The sight is pleased,
The scent regaled, each odoriferous leaf,
Each opening blossom, freely breathes abroad
Its gratitude, and thanks him with its sweets.

620

So manifold, all pleasing in their kind,
All healthful, are the employs of rural life,
Reiterated as the wheel of time
Runs round, still ending, and beginning still.
Nor are these all. To deck the shapely knoll,
That, softly swelled and gaily dressed, appears.

A flowery island, from the dark green lawn
Emerging, must be deemed a labour due
To no mean hand, and asks the touch of taste.

630

Here also grateful mixture of well-matched
And sorted hues (each giving each relief,
And by contrasted beauty shining more)
Is needful. Strength may wield the ponderous spade,
May turn the clod, and wheel the compost home,
But elegance, chief grace the garden shows,
And most attractive, is the fair result
Of thought, the creature of a polished mind.

640

Without it, all is gothic as the scene
To which the insipid citizen resorts
Near yonder heath ; where industry misspent,
But proud of his uncouth ill-chosen task,
Has made a heaven on earth ; with suns and moons
Of close-rammed stones has charged the encumbered soil
And fairly laid the zodiac in the dust.

He therefore who would see his flowers disposed
Sightly and in just order, ere he gives
The beds the trusted treasure of their seeds,
Forecasts the future whole ; that when the scene
Shall break into its preconceived display,
Each for itself, and all as with one voice
Conspiring, may attest his bright design.

650

Nor even then, dismissing as performed
His pleasant work, may he suppose it done.
Few self-supported flowers endure the wind
Uninjured, but expect the upholding aid
Of the smooth shaven prop, and, neatly tied,
Are wedded thus, like beauty to old age
For interest sake, the living to the dead.

660

Some clothe the soil that feeds them, far diffused
 And lowly creeping, modest and yet fair,
 Like virtue, thriving most where little seen :
 Some, more aspiring, catch the neighbour shrub
 With clasping tendrils, and invest his branch,
 Else unadorned, with many a gay festoon
 And fragrant chaplet, recompensing well
 The strength they borrow with the grace they lend.
 All hate the rank society of weeds, 670
 Noisome, and ever greedy to exhaust
 The impoverished earth ; an overbearing race,
 That, like the multitude made faction-mad,
 Disturb good order, and degrade true worth.
 O blest seclusion from a jarring world,
 Which he thus occupied enjoys ! Retreat
 Cannot indeed to guilty man restore
 Lost innocence, or cancel follies past ;
 But it has peace, and much secures the mind 680
 From all assaults of evil, proving still
 A faithful barrier, not o'erleaped with ease
 By vicious custom raging uncontrolled
 Abroad, and desolating public life.
 When fierce temptation, seconded within
 By traitor appetite, and armed with darts
 Tempered in hell, invades the throbbing breast,
 To combat may be glorious, and success
 Perhaps may crown us, but to fly is safe.
 Had I the choice of sublunary good,
 What could I wish that I possess not here ? 690
 Health, leisure, means to improve it, friendship, peace,
 No loose or wanton thought a wandering muse,
 And constant occupation without care.
 Thus blest, I draw a picture of that bliss ;
 Hopeless indeed that dissipated minds,
 And profligate abusers of a world
 Created fair so much in vain for them
 Should seek the guiltless joys that I describe,
 Allured by my report : but sure no less
 That self condemned they must neglect the prize, 700
 And what they will not taste must yet approve.
 What we admire we praise ; and when we praise,
 Advance it into notice, that, its worth
 Acknowledged, others may admire it too.
 I therefore recommend, though at the risk
 Of popular disgust, yet boldly still,
 The cause of piety, and sacred truth,
 And virtue, and those scenes which God ordained

Should best secure them and promote them most ;
 Scenes that I love, and with regret perceive 710
 Forsaken, or through folly not enjoyed.
 Pure is the nymph, though liberal of her smiles,
 And chaste, though unconfined, whom I extol ;
 Not as the prince in Shushan, when he called,
 Vainglorious of her charms, his Vashti forth
 To grace the full pavilion. His design
 Was but to boast his own peculiar good,
 Which all might view with envy, none partake.
 My charmer is not mine alone ; my sweets,
 And she that sweetens all my bitters too, 720
 Nature, enchanting Nature, in whose form
 And lineaments divine I trace a hand
 That errs not, and find raptures still renewed,
 Is free to all men, universal prize.
 Strange that so fair a creature should yet want
 Admirers, and be destined to divide
 With meaner objects even the few she finds.
 Stripped of her ornaments, her leaves, and flowers,
 She loses all her influence. Cities then
 Attract us, and neglected nature pines, 730
 Abandoned, as unworthy of our love.
 But are not wholesome airs, though unperfumed
 By roses, and clear suns, though scarcely felt,
 And groves, if unharmonious, yet secure
 From clamour, and whose very silence charms,
 To be preferred to smoke, to the eclipse
 That metropolitan volcanoes make,
 Whose Stygian throats breathe darkness all day long,
 And to the stir of commerce, driving slow,
 And thundering loud, with his ten thousand wheels ? 740
 They would be, were not madness in the head
 And folly in the heart ; were England now
 What England was, plain, hospitable, kind,
 And undebauched. But we have bid farewell
 To all the virtues of those better days,
 And all their honest pleasures. Mansions once
 Knew their own masters, and laborious hinds
 That had survived the father served the son.
 Now the legitimate and rightful lord
 Is but a transient guest, newly arrived, 750
 And soon to be supplanted. He that saw
 His patrimonial timber cast its leaf
 Sells the last scantling, and transfers the price
 To some shrewd sharper, ere it buds again.
 Estates are landscapes, gazed upon awhile,

Then advertised, and auctioneered away.
 The country starves, and they that feed the o'ercharged
 And surfeited lewd town with her fair dues
 By a just judgment strip and starve themselves.
 The wings that waft our riches out of sight 760
 Grow on the gamester's elbows, and the alert
 And nimble motion of those restless joints,
 That never tire, soon fans them all away.
 Improvement too, the idol of the age,
 Is fed with many a victim. Lo! he comes,—
 The omnipotent magician, Brown, appears.
 Down falls the venerable pile, the abode
 Of our forefathers, a grave whiskered race,
 But tasteless. Springs a palace in its stead,
 But in a distant spot, where more exposed, 770
 It may enjoy the advantage of the north,
 And aguish east, till time shall have transformed
 Those naked acres to a sheltering grove.
 He speaks. The lake in front becomes a lawn,
 Woods vanish, hills subside, and valleys rise,
 And streams, as if created for his use,
 Pursue the track of his directing wand,
 Sinuous or straight, now rapid and now slow,
 Now murmuring soft, now roaring in cascades,
 Even as he bids. The enraptured owner smiles. 780
 'Tis finished! and yet, finished as it seems,
 Still wants a grace, the loveliest it could show,
 A mine to satisfy the enormous cost.
 Drained to the last poor item of his wealth,
 He sighs, departs, and leaves the accomplished plan
 That he has touched, retouched, many a long day
 Laboured, and many a night pursued in dreams,
 Just when it meets his hopes, and proves the heaven
 He wanted, for a wealthier to enjoy.
 And now perhaps the glorious hour is come, 790
 When having no stake left, no pledge to endear
 Her interests, or that gives her sacred cause
 A moment's operation on his love,
 He burns with most intense and flagrant zeal
 To serve his country. Ministerial grace
 Deals him out money from the public chest;
 Or if that mine be shrt, some private purse
 Supplies his need with a usurious loan,
 To be refunded duly, when his vote,
 Well managed, shall have earned its worthy price. 800
 Oh innocent, compared with arts like these,
 Crape and cocked pistol, and the whistling ball

Sent through the traveller's temples! He that finds
 One drop of Heaven's sweet mercy in his cup,
 Can dig, beg, rot, and perish, well content
 So he may wrap himself in honest rags
 At his last gasp; but could not for a world
 Fish up his dirty and dependent bread
 From pools and ditches of the commonwealth,
 Sordid and sickening at his own success.

810

Ambition, avarice, penury incurred
By endless riot, vanity, the lust
Of pleasure and variety, despatch,
 As duly as the swallows disappear,
 The world of wandering knights and squires to town.
 London ingulfs them all. The shark is there,
 And the shark's prey; the spendthrift and the leech
 That sucks him. There the sycophant, and he
 That with bareheaded and obsequious bows
 Begs a warm office, doomed to a cold jail,
 And groat per diem, if his patron frown.
 The levee swarms, as if, in golden pomp,
 Were charactered on every statesman's door,
 "BATTERED AND BANKRUPT FORTUNES MENDED HERE."

820

These are the charms that sully and eclipse
 The charms of nature. 'Tis the cruel gripe
 That lean hard-handed poverty inflicts,
 The hope of better things, the chance to win,
 The wish to shine, the thirst to be amused,
 That at the sound of Winter's hoary wing
 Unpeople all our counties of such herds
 Of fluttering, loitering, cringing, begging, loose
 And wanton vagrants, as make London, vast
 And boundless as it is, a crowded coop.

830

Oh thou, resort and mart of all the earth,
 Chequered with all complexions of mankind,
 And spotted with all crimes; in whom I see
 Much that I love, and more that I admire,
 And all that I abhor; thou freckled fair,
 That pleasest and yet shock'st me, I can laugh
 And I can weep, can hope and can despond,
 Feel wrath and pity, when I think on thee!
 Ten righteous would have saved a city once,
 And thou hast many righteous.—Well for thee!
 That salt preserves thee; more corrupted else,
 And therefore more obnoxious at this hour,
 Than Sodom in her day had power to be,
 For whom God heard his Abraham plead in vain.

840

BOOK IV

THE WINTER EVENING

ARGUMENT.—The post comes in—The newspaper is read—The world contemplated at a distance—Address to winter—The amusements of a rural winter evening compared with the fashionable ones—Address to evening—A brown study—Fall of snow in the evening—The waggoner—A poor family piece—The rural thief—Public-houses—The multitude of them censured—The farmer's daughter; what she was; what she is—The simplicity of country manners almost lost—Causes of the change—Desertion of the country by the rich—Neglect of magistrates—The militia principally in fault—The new recruit and his transformation—Reflection on bodies corporate—The love of rural objects natural to all, and never to be totally extinguished.

HARK! 'tis the twanging horn! O'er yonder bridge,
 That with its wearisome but needful length
 Bestrides the wintry flood, in which the moon
 Sees her unwrinkled face reflected bright,
 He comes, the herald of a noisy world,
 With spattered boots, strapped waist, and frozen locks,
 News from all nations lumbering at his back.
 True to his charge the close-packed load behind,
 Yet careless what he brings, his one concern
 Is to conduct it to the destined inn, 10
 And, having dropped the expected bag, pass on.
 He whistles as he goes, light-hearted wretch,
 Cold and yet cheerful: messenger of grief
 Perhaps to thousands, and of joy to some,
 To him indifferent whether grief or joy.
 Houses in ashes, and the fall of stocks,
 Births, deaths, and marriages, epistles, wet
 With tears that trickled down the writer's cheeks
 Fast as the periods from his fluent quill,
 Or charged with amorous sighs of absent swains 20
 Or nymphs responsive, equally affect
 His horse and him, unconscious of them all.
 But oh the important budget! ushered in
 With such heart-shaking music, who can say
 What are its tidings? have our troops awaked?
 Or do they still, as if with opium drugged,
 Snore to the murmurs of the Atlantic wave?
 Is India free? and does she wear her plumed
 And jewelled turban with a smile of peace,

Or do we grind her still? The grand debate, 30
 The popular harangue, the tart reply,
 The logic, and the wisdom, and the wit,
 And the loud laugh—I long to know them all ;
 I burn to set the imprisoned wranglers free,
 And give them voice and utterance once again.
 Now stir the fire, and close the shutters fast,
 Let fall the curtains, wheel the sofa round,
 And while the bubbling and loud hissing urn
 Throws up a steamy column, and the cups
 That cheer but not inebriate, wait on each, 40
 So let us welcome peaceful evening in.
 Not such his evening, who with shining face
 Sweats in the crowded theatre, and, squeezed
 And bored with elbow-points through both his sides,
 Outscolds the ranting actor on the stage ;
 Nor his, who patient stands till his feet throb,
 And his head thumps, to feed upon the breath
 Of patriots bursting with heroic rage,
 Or placemen all tranquillity and smiles.
 This folio of four pages, happy work 50
 Which not even critics criticise ; that holds
 Inquisitive attention, while I read,
 Fast bound in chains of silence, which the fair,
 Though eloquent themselves, yet fear to break ;
 What is it but a map of busy life,
 Its fluctuations, and its vast concerns ?
 Here runs the mountainous and craggy ridge
 That tempts ambition. On the summit, see,
 The seals of office glitter in his eyes ;
 He climbs, he pants, he grasps them. At his heels, 60
 Close at his heels, a demagogue ascends,
 And with a dexterous jerk soon twists him down,
 And wins them, but to lose them in his turn.
 Here rills of oily eloquence in soft
 Meanders lubricate the course they take ;
 The modest speaker is ashamed and grieved
 To engross a moment's notice, and yet begs,
 Begs a propitious ear for his poor thoughts,
 However trivial all that he conceives.
 Sweet bashfulness ! it claims, at least, this praise ; 70
 The dearth of information and good sense
 That it foretells us, always comes to pass.
 Cataracts of declamation thunder here,
 There forests of no meaning spread the page
 In which all comprehension wanders lost ;
 While fields of pleasantry amuse us there

With merry descants on a nation's woes.
 The rest appears a wilderness of strange
 But gay confusion ; roses for the cheeks
 And lilies for the brows of faded age, 80
 Teeth for the toothless, ringlets for the bald,
 Heaven, earth, and ocean plundered of their sweets,
 Nectareous essences, Olympian dews,
 Sermons and city feasts, and favourite airs,
 Æthereal journeys, submarine exploits,
 And Katterfelto, with his hair on end
 At his own wonders, wondering for his bread
 'Tis pleasant through the loopholes of retreat
 To peep at such a world ; to see the stir
 Of the great Babel, and not feel the crowd ; 90
 To hear the roar she sends through all her gates
 At a safe distance, where the dying sound
 Falls a soft murmur on the uninjured ear.
 Thus sitting, and surveying thus at ease
 The globe and its concerns, I seem advanced
 To some secure and more than mortal height,
 That liberates and exempts me from them all.
 It turns submitted to my view, turns round
 With all its generations ; I behold
 The tumult, and am still. The sound of war 100
 Has lost its terrors ere it reaches me ;
 Grieves, but alarms me not. I mourn the pride
 And avarice that make man a wolf to man,
 Hear the faint echo of those brazen throats,
 By which he speaks the language of his heart,
 And sigh, but never tremble at the sound.
 He travels and expatiates, as the bee
 From flower to flower, so he from land to land ;
 The manners, customs, policy of all
 Pay contribution to the store he gleans ; 110
 He sucks intelligence in every clime,
 And spreads the honey of his deep research
 At his return, a rich repast for me.
 He travels, and I too. I tread his deck,
 Ascend his topmast, through his peering eyes
 Discover countries, with a kindred heart
 Suffer his woes, and share in his escapes ;
 While fancy, like the finger of a clock,
 Runs the great circuit, and is still at home.
 O Winter ! ruler of the inverted year, 120
 Thy scattered hair with sleet like ashes filled,
 Thy breath congealed upon thy lips, thy cheeks
 Fringed with a beard made white with other snows

Than those of age, thy forehead wrapt in clouds,
 A leafless branch thy sceptre, and thy throne
 A sliding car, indebted to no wheels,
 But urged by storms along its slippery way ;
 I love thee, all unlovely as thou seemest,
 And dreaded as thou art. Thou holdest the sun
 A prisoner in the yet undawning east, 130
 Shortening his journey between morn and noon,
 And hurrying him, impatient of his stay,
 Down to the rosy west ; but kindly still
 Compensating his loss with added hours
 Of social converse and instructive ease,
 And gathering, at short notice, in one group
 The family dispersed, and fixing thought,
 Not less dispersed by daylight and its cares.
 I crown thee King of intimate delights,
 Fireside enjoyments, homeborn happiness, 140
 And all the comforts that the lowly roof
 Of undisturbed retirement, and the hours
 Of long uninterrupted evening know.
 No rattling wheels stop short before these gates ;
 No powdered pert, proficient in the art
 Of sounding an alarm, assaults these doors
 Till the street rings ; no stationary steeds
 Cough their own knell, while, heedless of the sound,
 The silent circle fan themselves, and quake :
 But here the needle plies its busy task, 150
 The pattern grows, the well-depicted flower,
 Wrought patiently into the snowy lawn,
 Unfolds its bosom ; buds, and leaves, and sprigs,
 And curling tendrils, gracefully disposed,
 Follow the nimble finger of the fair ;
 A wreath that cannot fade, of flowers that blow
 With most success when all besides decay.
 The poet's or historian's page, by one
 Made vocal for the amusement of the rest ;
 The sprightly lyre, whose treasure of sweet sounds 160
 The touch from many a trembling chord shakes out ;
 And the clear voice symphonious, yet distinct,
 And in the charming strife triumphant still ;
 Beguile the night, and set a keener edge
 On female industry : the threaded steel
 Flies swiftly, and unfelt the task proceeds.
 The volume closed, the customary rites
 Of the last meal commence. A Roman meal,
 Such as the mistress of the world once found
 Delicious, when her patriots of high note, 170

Perhaps by moonlight, at their humble doors,
 And under an old oak's domestic shade,
 Enjoyed, spare feast ! a radish and an egg.
 Discourse ensues, not trivial, yet not dull,
 Nor such as with a frown forbids the play
 Of fancy, or proscribes the sound of mirth ;
 Nor do we madly, like an impious world,
 Who deem religion frenzy, and the God
 That made them an intruder on their joys,
 Start at His awful name, or deem His praise
 A jarring note. Themes of a graver tone,
 Exciting oft our gratitude and love,
 While we retrace with memory's pointing wand
 That calls the past to our exact review,
 The dangers we have 'scaped, the broken snare,
 The disappointed foe, deliverance found
 Unlooked for, life preserved and peace restored,
 Fruits of omnipotent eternal love.
 " Oh evenings worthy of the gods ! " exclaimed
 The Sabine bard. Oh evenings, I reply,
 More to be prized and coveted than yours,
 As more illumined, and with nobler truths,
 That I and mine, and those we love, enjoy.
 Is Winter hideous in a garb like this ?
 Needs he the tragic fur, the smoke of lamps,
 The pent-up breath of an unsavoury throng,
 To thaw him into feeling, or the smart
 And snappish dialogue that flippant wits
 Call comedy, to prompt him with a smile ?
 The self-complacent actor, when he views
 (Stealing a sidelong glance at a full house)
 The slope of faces from the floor to the roof
 (As if one master spring controlled them all)
 Relaxed into an universal grin;
 Sees not a countenance there that speaks of joy
 Half so refined or so sincere as ours.
 Cards were superfluous here, with all the tricks
 That idleness has ever yet contrived
 To fill the void of an unfurnished brain,
 To palliate dulness, and give time a shove.
 Time as he passes us has a dove's wing,
 Unsoiled and swift, and of a silken sound ;
 But the world's time is time in masquerade.
 Theirs, should I paint him, has his pinions fledged
 With motley plumes ; and, where the peacock shows
 His azure eyes, is tintured black and red
 With spots quadrangular of diamond form,

Ensanguined hearts, clubs typical of strife,
 And spades, the emblems of untimely graves.
 What should be and what was an hour-glass once 220
 Becomes a dice-box, and a billiard mast
 Well does the work of his destructive scythe.
 Thus decked, he charms a world whom fashion blinds
 To his true worth, most pleased when idle most,
 Whose only happy are their wasted hours.
 Even misses, at whose age their mothers wore
 The backstring and the bib, assume the dress
 Of womanhood, sit pupils in the school
 Of card-devoted time, and night by night
 Placed at some vacant corner of the board, 230
 Learn every trick, and soon play all the game.
 But truce with censure. Roving as I rove,
 Where shall I find an end, or how proceed?
 As he that travels far oft turns aside
 To view some rugged rock or mouldering tower,
 Which seen delights him not; then, coming home,
 Describes and prints it, that the world may know
 How far he went for what was nothing worth;
 So I, with brush in hand and pallet spread,
 With colours mixed for a far different use, 240
 Paint cards and dolls, and every idle thing
 That fancy finds in her excursive flights.

Come, Evening, once again, season of peace;
 Return, sweet Evening, and continue long!
 Methinks I see thee in the streaky west,
 With matron-step slow-moving, while the Night
 Treads on thy sweeping train; one hand employed
 In letting fall the curtain of repose
 On bird and beast, the other charged for man
 With sweet oblivion of the cares of day; 250
 Not sumptuously adorned, nor needing aid,
 Like homely-featured Night, of clustering gems;
 A star or two just twinkling on thy brow
 Suffices thee; save that the moon is thine
 No less than hers, not worn indeed on high
 With ostentatious pageantry, but set
 With modest grandeur in thy purple zone,
 Resplendent less, but of an ampler round.
 Come then, and thou shalt find thy votary calm,
 Or make me so. Composure is thy gift: 260
 And whether I devote thy gentler hours
 To books, to music, or the poet's toil;
 To weaving nets for bird-alluring fruit;
 Or twining silken threads round ivory reels,



W. H. H.

Evening



When they command whom man was born to please ;
I slight thee not, but make thee welcome still.

Just when our drawing-rooms begin to blaze
With lights by clear reflexion multiplied
From many a mirror, in which he of Gath,
Goliath, might have seen his giant bulk 270
Whole without stooping, towering crest and all,
My pleasures too begin. But me perhaps
The glowing hearth may satisfy awhile
With faint illumination, that uplifts
The shadow to the ceiling, there by fits
Dancing uncouthly to the quivering flame.

Not undelightful is an hour to me
So spent in parlour twilight ; such a gloom
Suits well the thoughtful or unthinking mind,
The mind contemplative, with some new theme 280
Pregnant, or indisposed alike to all.

Laugh, ye who boast your more mercurial powers,
That never feel a stupor, know no pause,
Nor need one ; I am conscious, and confess,
Fearless, a soul that does not always think.
Me oft has fancy ludicrous and wild
Soothed with a waking dream of houses, towers,
Trees, churches, and strange visages expressed
In the red cinders, while with poring eye
I gazed, myself creating what I saw. 290

Nor less amused have I quiescent watched
The sooty films that play upon the bars
Pendulous, and foreboding, in the view
Of superstition prophesying still
Though still deceived, some stranger's near approach.
'Tis thus the understanding takes repose
In indolent vacuity of thought,
And sleeps and is refreshed. Meanwhile the face
Conceals the mood lethargic with a mask
Of deep deliberation, as the man 300

Were tasked to his full strength, absorbed and lost.
Thus oft, reclined at ease, I lose an hour
At evening, till at length the freezing blast,
That sweeps the bolted shutter, summons home
The recollected powers, and snapping short
The glassy threads with which the fancy weaves
Her brittle toys, restores me to myself.
How calm is my recess, and how the frost,
Raging abroad, and the rough wind, endear
The silence and the warmth enjoyed within ! 310
I saw the woods and fields at close of day

A variegated show ; the meadows green,
 Though faded ; and the lands, where lately waved
 The golden harvest, of a mellow brown,
 Upturned so lately by the forceful share :
 I saw far off the weedy fallows smile
 With verdure not unprofitable, grazed
 By flocks, fast feeding, and selecting each
 His favourite herb ; while all the leafless groves
 That skirt the horizon, wore a sable hue,
 Scarce noticed in the kindred dusk of eve.
 To-morrow brings a change, a total change !
 Which even now, though silently performed
 And slowly, and by most unfelt, the face
 Of universal nature undergoes.

320

Fast falls a fleecy shower : the downy flakes
 Descending, and, with never-ceasing lapse,
 Softly alighting upon all below,
 Assimilate all objects. Earth receives
 Gladly the thickening mantle, and the green
 And tender blade that feared the chilling blast
 Escapes unhurt beneath so warm a veil.

330

In such a world, so thorny, and where none
 Finds happiness unblighted, or, if found,
 Without some thistly sorrow at its side,
 It seems the part of wisdom, and no sin
 Against the law of love, to measure lots
 With less distinguished than ourselves, that thus
 We may with patience bear our moderate ills,
 And sympathise with others suffering more.
 Ill fares the traveller now, and he that stalks
 In ponderous boots beside his reeking team.
 The wain goes heavily, impeded sore
 By congregated loads adhering close
 To the clogged wheels ; and, in its sluggish pace
 Noiseless, appears a moving hill of snow.

340

The toiling steeds expand the nostril wide,
 While every breath, by respiration strong
 Forced downward, is consolidated soon
 Upon their jutting chests. He, formed to bear
 The pelting brunt of the tempestuous night,
 With half-shut eyes and puckered cheeks, and teeth
 Presented bare against the storm, plods on.
 One hand secures his hat, save when with both
 He brandishes his pliant length of whip,
 Resounding oft and never heard in vain.
 Oh happy ! and in my account, denied
 That sensibility of pain with which

350

Refinement is endued, thrice happy thou.
 Thy frame, robust and hardy, feels indeed
 The piercing cold, but feels it unimpaired.
 The learned finger never need explore
 Thy vigorous pulse ; and the unhealthful east,
 That breathes the spleen and searches every bone
 Of the infirm, is wholesome air to thee.
 Thy days roll on exempt from household care ;
 The waggon is thy wife ; and the poor beasts
 That drag the dull companion to and fro,
 Thine helpless charge, dependent on thy care.
 Ah, treat them kindly ! rude as thou appearest,
 Yet show that thou hast mercy, which the great,
 With needless hurry whirled from place to place,
 Humane as they would seem, not always show.

360

370

Poor, yet industrious, modest, quiet, neat,
 Such claim compassion in a night like this,
 And have a friend in every feeling heart.
 Warmed, while it lasts, by labour, all day long
 They brave the season, and yet find at eve,
 Ill clad and fed but sparely, time to cool.
 The frugal housewife trembles when she lights
 Her scanty stock of brushwood, blazing clear,
 But dying soon, like all terrestrial joys.
 The few small embers left she nurses well,
 And while her infant race, with outspread hands
 And crowded knees, sit cowering o'er the sparks,
 Retires, content to quake so they be warmed.
 The man feels least, as more inured than she
 To winter, and the current in his veins
 More briskly moved by his severer toil ;
 Yet he too finds his own distress in theirs.
 The taper soon extinguished, which I saw
 Dangled along at the cold finger's end
 Just when the day declined, and the brown loaf
 Lodged on the shelf, half eaten, without sauce
 Of savoury cheese or butter costlier still,
 Sleep seems their only refuge : for, alas !
 Where penury is felt the thought is chained,
 And sweet colloquial pleasures are but few.
 With all this thrift they thrive not. All the care
 Ingenious parsimony takes but just
 Saves the small inventory, bed and stool,
 Skillet and old carved chest, from public sale.
 They live, and live without extorted alms
 From grudging hands, but other boast have none
 To soothe their honest pride, that scorns to beg ;

380

390

400

Nor comfort else, but in their mutual love.
 I praise you much, ye meek and patient pair,
 For ye are worthy; choosing rather far
 A dry but independent crust, hard earned
 And eaten with a sigh, than to endure 410
 The rugged frowns and insolent rebuffs
 Of knaves in office partial in the work
 Of distribution; liberal of their aid
 To clamorous importunity in rags,
 But oft-times deaf to suppliants who would blush
 To wear a tattered garb however coarse,
 Whom famine cannot reconcile to filth;
 These ask with painful shyness, and, refused
 Because deserving, silently retire.
 But be ye of good courage. Time itself 420
 Shall much befriend you. Time shall give increase,
 And all your numerous progeny, well trained
 But helpless, in few years shall find their hands,
 And labour too. Meanwhile ye shall not want
 What, conscious of your virtues, we can spare,
 Nor what a wealthier than ourselves may send.
 I mean the man who, when the distant poor
 Need help, denies them nothing but his name.
 But poverty, with most who whimper forth
 Their long complaints, is self-inflicted woe, 430
 The effect of laziness or sottish waste.
 Now goes the nightly thief prowling abroad
 For plunder; much solicitous how best
 He may compensate for a day of sloth
 By works of darkness and nocturnal wrong.
 Woe to the gardener's pale, the farmer's hedge
 Plashed neatly, and secured with driven stakes
 Deep in the loamy bank. Uptorn by strength,
 Resistless in so bad a cause but lame
 To better deeds, he bundles up the spoil, 440
 An ass's burden, and, when laden most
 And heaviest, light of foot steals fast away.
 Nor does the boarded hovel better guard
 The well-stacked pile of riven logs and roots
 From his pernicious force. Nor will he leave
 Unwrenched the door, however well secured,
 Where chancicleer amidst his harem sleeps
 In unsuspecting pomp. Twitched from the perch
 He gives the princely bird, with all his wives,
 To his voracious bag, struggling in vain, 450
 And loudly wondering at the sudden change.
 Nor this to feed his own. 'Twere some excuse

Did pity of their sufferings warp aside
His principle, and tempt him into sin
For their support, so destitute. But they
Neglected pine at home, themselves, as more
Exposed than others, with less scruple made
His victims, robbed of their defenceless all.
Cruel is all he does. 'Tis quenchless thirst
Of ruinous ebriety that prompts
His every action, and imbrates the man. 460
Oh for a law to noose the villain's neck
Who starves his own : who persecutes the blood
He gave them in his children's veins, and hates
And wrongs the woman he has sworn to love !

Pass where we may, through city or through town,
Village or hamlet, of this merry land
Though lean and beggared, every twentieth pace
Conducts the unguarded nose to such a whiff
Of stale debauch, forth issuing from the styes 470
That law has licensed, as makes temperance reel.
There sit, involved and lost in curling clouds
Of Indian fume, and guzzling deep, the boor,
The lackey, and the groom ; the craftsman there
Takes a Lethean leave of all his toil ;
Smith, cobbler, joiner, he that plies the shears,
And he that kneads the dough ; all loud alike,
All learnèd, and all drunk. The fiddle screams
Plaintive and piteous, as it wept and wailed
Its wasted tones and harmony unheard ; 480
Fierce the dispute, whate'er the theme ; while she,
Fell Discord, arbitress of such debate,
Perched on the sign-post, holds with even hand
Her undecisive scales. In this she lays
A weight of ignorance ; in that, of pride ;
And smiles delighted with the eternal poise.
Dire is the frequent curse, and its twin sound
The cheek-distending oath, not to be praised
As ornamental, musical, polite,
Like those which modern senators employ, 490
Whose oath is rhetoric and who swear for fame.
Behold the schools in which plebeian minds,
Once simple, are initiated in arts
Which some may practise with politer grace,
But none with readier skill ! 'Tis here they learn
The road that leads from competence and peace
To indigence and rapine ; till at last
Society, grown weary of the load,
Shakes her encumbered lap, and casts them out.

But censure profits little. Vain the attempt 500
 To advertise in verse a public pest
 That, like the filth with which the peasant feeds
 His hungry acres, stinks and is of use.
 The excise is fattened with the rich result
 Of all this riot ; and ten thousand casks,
 For ever dribbling out their base contents,
 Touched by the Midas finger of the State,
 Bleed gold for ministers to sport away.
 Drink and be mad then ; 'tis your country bids.
 Gloriously drunk, obey the important call ! 510
 Her cause demands the assistance of your throats ;
 Ye all can swallow, and she asks no more.

Would I had fallen upon those happier days
 That poets celebrate ; those golden times
 And those Arcadian scenes that Maro sings,
 And Sidney, warbler of poetic prose.
 Nymphs were Dianas then, and swains had hearts
 That felt their virtues : innocence, it seems,
 From courts dismissed, found shelter in the groves.
 The footsteps of simplicity, impressed 520
 Upon the yielding herbage (so they sing),
 Then were not all effaced : then speech profane,
 And manners profligate, were rarely found,
 Observed as prodigies, and soon reclaimed.
 Vain wish ! those days were never : airy dreams
 Sat for the picture ; and the poet's hand,
 Imparting substance to an empty shade,
 Imposed a gay delirium for a truth.

Grant it : I still must envy them an age 530
 That favoured such a dream, in days like these
 Impossible, when virtue is so scarce
 That to suppose a scene where she presides
 Is tramontane, and stumbles all belief.
 No : we are polished now. The rural lass
 Whom once her virgin modesty and grace,
 Her artless manner, and her neat attire,
 So dignified that she was hardly less
 Than the fair shepherdess of old romance,
 Is seen no more. The character is lost.
 Her head, adorned with lappets pinned aloft 540
 And ribands streaming gay, superbly raised
 And magnified beyond all human size,
 Indebted to some smart wig-weaver's hand
 For more than half the tresses it sustains ;
 Her elbows ruffled, and her tottering form
 Ill propped upon French heels ; she might be deemed

(But that the basket dangling on her arm
Interprets her more truly) of a rank
Too proud for dairy work or sale of eggs.
Expect her soon with footboy at her heels, 550
No longer blushing for her awkward load,
Her train and her umbrella all her care.

The town has tinged the country ; and the stain —
Appears a spot upon a vestal's robe,
The worse for what it soils. The fashion runs
Down into scenes still rural ; but, alas !
Scenes rarely graced with rural manners now.
Time was when in the pastoral retreat
The unguarded door was safe ; men did not watch
To invade another's right, or guard their own. 560
Then sleep was undisturbed by fear, unscared
By drunken howlings ; and the chilling tale
Of midnight murder was a wonder heard
With doubtful credit, told to frighten babes.
But farewell now to unsuspecting nights,
And slumbers unalarmed. Now, ere you sleep,
See that your polished arms be primed with care,
And drop the nightbolt ; ruffians are abroad ;
And the first larum of the cock's shrill throat
May prove a trumpet, summoning your ear 570
To horrid sounds of hostile feet within.
Even daylight has its dangers ; and the walk
Through pathless wastes and woods, unconscious once
Of other tenants than melodious birds
Or harmless flocks, is hazardous and bold.
Lamented change ! to which full many a cause
Inveterate, hopeless of a cure, conspires.
The course of human things from good to ill,
From ill to worse, is fatal, never fails.
Increase of power begets increase of wealth ; 580
Wealth luxury, and luxury excess ;
Excess, the scrofulous and itchy plague
That seizes first the opulent, descends
To the next rank contagious, and in time
Taints downward all the graduated scale
Of order, from the chariot to the plough.
The rich, and they that have an arm to check
The licence of the lowest in degree,
Desert their office ; and, themselves intent
On pleasure, haunt the capital, and thus 590
To all the violence of lawless hands
Resign the scenes their presence might protect.
Authority herself not seldom sleeps,

Though resident, and witness of the wrong.
 The plump convivial parson often bears
 The magisterial sword in vain, and lays
 His reverence and his worship both to rest
 On the same cushion of habitual sloth.
 Perhaps timidity restrains his arm;
 When he should strike, he trembles, and sets free, 600
 Himself enslaved by terror of the band,
 The audacious convict whom he dares not bind.
 Perhaps, though by profession ghostly pure,
 He too may have his vice, and sometimes prove
 Less dainty than becomes his grave outside
 In lucrative concerns. Examine well
 His milk-white hand; the palm is hardly clean,
 But here and there an ugly smutch appears.
 Foh! 'twas a bribe that left it: he has touched
 Corruption. Whoso seeks an audit here 610
 Propitious, pays his tribute, game or fish,
 Wildfowl or venison, and his errand speeds.
 But faster far, and more than all the rest,
 A noble cause, which none who bears a spark
 Of public virtue ever wished removed,
 Works the deplored and mischievous effect.
 'Tis universal soldiership has stabbed
 The heart of merit in the meaner class,
 Arms, through the vanity and brainless rage
 Of those that bear them, in whatever cause, 620
 Seem most at variance with all moral good,
 And incompatible with serious thought.
 The clown, the child of nature, without guile,
 Blest with an infant's ignorance of all
 But his own simple pleasures, now and then
 A wrestling-match, a foot-race, or a fair,
 Is balloted, and trembles at the news:
 Sheepish he doffs his hat, and mumbling swears
 A Bible-oath to be whate'er they please,
 To do he knows not what. The task performed, 630
 That instant he becomes the serjeant's care,
 His pupil, and his torment, and his jest.
 His awkward gait, his introverted toes,
 Bent knees, round shoulders, and dejected looks
 Procure him many a curse. By slow degrees,
 Unapt to learn, and formed of stubborn stuff,
 He yet by slow degrees puts off himself,
 Grows conscious of a change, and likes it well;
 He stands erect; his slouch becomes a walk;
 He steps right onward, martial in his air, 640

His form, and movement; is as smart above
 As meal and larded locks can make him; wears
 His hat, or his plumed helmet, with a grace;
 And, his three years of heroship expired,
 Returns indignant to the slighted plough.
 He hates the field in which no fife or drum
 Attends him, drives his cattle to a march,
 And sighs for the smart comrades he has left.
 'Twere well if his exterior change were all;
 But with his clumsy port the wretch has lost
 His ignorance and harmless manners too.
 To swear, to game, to drink, to show at home
 By lewdness, idleness, and Sabbath breach,
 The great proficiency he made abroad,
 To astonish and to grieve his gazing friends,
 To break some maiden's and his mother's heart,
 To be a pest where he was useful once,
 Are his sole aim, and all his glory now.

650

Man in society is like a flower
 Blown in its native bed: 'tis there alone
 His faculties, expanded in full bloom,
 Shine out, there only reach their proper use.
 But man associated and leagued with man
 By regal warrant, or self-joined by bond
 For interest sake, or swarming into clans
 Beneath one head for purposes of war,
 Like flowers selected from the rest, and bound
 And bundled close to fill some crowded vase,
 Fades rapidly, and by compression marred,
 Contracts defilement not to be endured.
 Hence chartered boroughs are such public plagues,
 And burghers, men immaculate perhaps
 In all their private functions, once combined,
 Become a loathsome body, only fit
 For dissolution, hurtful to the main.
 Hence merchants, unimpeachable of sin
 Against the charities of domestic life,
 Incorporated, seem at once to lose
 Their nature, and, disclaiming all regard
 For mercy and the common rights of man,
 Build factories with blood, conducting trade
 At the sword's point, and dyeing the white robe
 Of innocent commercial justice red.
 Hence too the field of glory, as the world
 Misdeems it dazzled by its bright array,
 With all its majesty of thundering pomp,
 Enchanting music, and immortal wreaths,

660

670

680

Is but a school where thoughtlessness is taught
 On principle, where foppery atones
 For folly, gallantry for every vice.

690

But slighted as it is, and by the great
 Abandoned, and, which still I more regret,
 Infected with the manners and the modes
 It knew not once, the country wins me still.
 I never framed a wish, or formed a plan
 That flattered me with hopes of earthly bliss,
 But there I laid the scene. There early strayed
 My fancy, ere yet liberty of choice
 Had found me, or the hope of being free.
 My very dreams were rural, rural too
 The firstborn efforts of my youthful muse,
 Sportive, and jingling her poetic bells
 Ere yet her ear was mistress of their powers.
 No bard could please me but whose lyre was tuned
 To Nature's praises. Heroes and their feats
 Fatigued me, never weary of the pipe
 Of Tityrus assembling, as he sang,
 The rustic throng beneath his favourite beech.

700

Then Milton had indeed a poet's charms :
 New to my taste, his Paradise surpassed
 The struggling efforts of my boyish tongue
 To speak its excellence ; I danced for joy.
 I marvelled much that, at so ripe an age
 As twice seven years, his beauties had then first
 Engaged my wonder, and, admiring still
 And still admiring, with regret supposed
 The joy half lost because not sooner found.

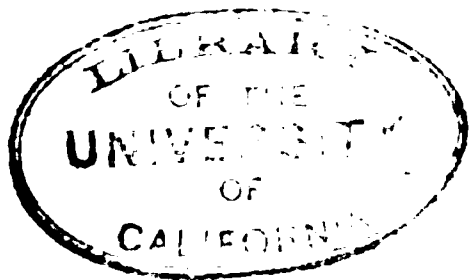
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Thee too, enamoured of the life I loved,
 Pathetic in its praise, in its pursuit
 Determined, and possessing it at last
 With transports such as favoured lovers feel,
 I studied, prized, and wished that I had known,
 Ingenious Cowley ! and though now, reclaimed
 By modern lights from an erroneous taste,
 I cannot but lament thy splendid wit
 Entangled in the cobwebs of the schools,
 I still revere thee, courtly though retired,
 Though stretched at ease in Chertsey's silent bowers
 Not unemployed, and finding rich amends
 For a lost world in solitude and verse.

720

'Tis born with all : the love of Nature's works
 Is an ingredient in the compound, man,
 Infused at the creation of the kind.
 And though the Almighty Maker has throughout

730



Winter

Discriminated each from each, by strokes
 And touches of his hand, with so much art
 Diversified, that two were never found
 Twins at all points—yet this obtains in all,
 That all discern a beauty in his works,
 And all can taste them : minds that have been formed 740
 And tutored, with a relish more exact,
 But none without some relish, none unmoved.
 It is a flame that dies not even there
 Where nothing feeds it. Neither business, crowds,
 Nor habits of luxurious city life,
 Whatever else they smother of true worth
 In human bosoms, quench it or abate.
 The villas with which London stands begirt,
 Like a swarth Indian with his belt of beads,
 Prove it. A breath of unadulterate air, 750
 The glimpse of a green pasture, how they cheer
 The citizen, and brace his languid frame !
 Even in the stifling bosom of the town,
 A garden in which nothing thrives has charms
 That soothe the rich possessor ; much consoled
 That here and there some sprigs of mournful mint,
 Of nightshade, or valerian, grace the well
 He cultivates. These serve him with a hint
 That Nature lives ; that sight-refreshing green
 Is still the livery she delights to wear, 760
 Though sickly samples of the exuberant whole.
 What are the casements lined with creeping herbs,
 The prouder sashes fronted with a range
 Of orange, myrtle, or the fragrant weed,
 The Frenchman's darling ? * Are they not all proofs
 That man immured in cities still retains
 His inborn inextinguishable thirst
 Of rural scenes, compensating his loss
 By supplemental shifts, the best he may ?
 The most unfurnished with the means of life, 770
 And they that never pass their brick-wall bounds
 To range the fields and treat their lungs with air,
 Yet feel the burning instinct ; over-head
 Suspend their crazy boxes, planted thick,
 And watered duly. There the pitcher stands
 A fragment, and the spoutless teapot there ;
 Sad witnesses how close-pent man regrets
 The country, with what ardour he contrives
 A peep at nature, when he can no more.
 Hail, therefore, patroness of health and ease 780

* Mignonette.

And contemplation, heart-consoling joys
 And harmless pleasures in the thronged abode
 Of multitudes unknown ! hail, rural life !
 Address himself who will to the pursuit
 Of honours, or emolument, or fame,
 I shall not add myself to such a chase,
 Thwart his attempts, or envy his success.
 Some must be great. Great offices will have
 Great talents : and God gives to every man
 The virtue, temper, understanding, taste,
 That lifts him into life, and lets him fall
 Just in the niche he was ordained to fill.
 To the deliverer of an injured land
 He gives a tongue to enlarge upon, a heart
 To feel, and courage to redress her wrongs ;
 To monarchs dignity ; to judges sense ;
 To artists ingenuity and skill ;
 To me an unambitious mind, content
 In the low vale of life, that early felt
 A wish for ease and leisure, and ere long
 Found here that leisure and that ease I wished.

790

800

BOOK V

THE WINTER MORNING WALK

ARGUMENT.—A frosty morning—The foddering of cattle—The woodman and his dog—The poultry—Whimsical effects of frost at a waterfall—The Empress of Russia's palace of ice—Amusements of monarchs—War, one of them—Wars, whence—And whence monarchy—The evils of it—English and French loyalty contrasted—The Bastille, and a prisoner there—Liberty the chief recommendation of this country—Modern patriotism questionable, and why—The perishable nature of the best human institutions—Spiritual liberty not perishable—The slavish state of man by nature—Deliver him, Deist, if you can—Grace must do it—The respective merits of patriots and martyrs stated—Their different treatment—Happy freedom of the man whom grace makes free—His relish of the works of God—Address to the Creator.

'TIS morning ; and the sun, with ruddy orb
 Ascending, fires the horizon : while the clouds
 That crowd away before the driving wind,
 More ardent as the disk emerges more,
 Resemble most some city in a blaze,

Seen through the leafless wood. His slanting ray
Slides ineffectual down the snowy vale,
And tinging all with his own rosy hue,
From every herb and every spiry blade
Stretches a length of shadow o'er the field. 10
Mine, spindling into longitude immense,
In spite of gravity and sage remark
That I myself am but a fleeting shade,
Provokes me to a smile. With eye askance
I view the muscular proportioned limb
Transformed to a lean shank. The shapeless pair,
As they designed to mock me, at my side
Take step for step; and as I near approach
The cottage, walk along the plastered wall,
Preposterous sight! the legs without the man. 20
The verdure of the plain lies buried deep
Beneath the dazzling deluge; and the bents
And coarser grass upspearing o'er the rest,
Of late unsightly and unseen, now shine
Conspicuous, and, in bright apparel clad
And fledged with icy feathers, nod superb.
The cattle mourn in corners where the fence
Screens them, and seem half-petrified to sleep
In unrecumbent sadness. There they wait
Their wonted fodder, not, like hungering man, 30
Fretful if unsupplied, but silent, meek,
And patient of the slow-paced swain's delay.
He from the stack carves out the accustomed load,
Deep-plunging, and again deep-plunging oft,
His broad keen knife into the solid mass;
Smooth as a wall the upright remnant stands,
With such undeviating and even force
He severs it away: no needless care
Lest storms should overset the leaning pile
Deciduous, or its own unbalanced weight. 40
Forth goes the woodman, leaving unconcerned
The cheerful haunts of man, to wield the axe
And drive the wedge in yonder forest drear,
From morn to eve his solitary task.
Shaggy, and lean, and shrewd, with pointed ears
And tail cropped short, half lurcher and half cur,
His dog attends him. Close behind his heel
Now creeps he slow; and now with many a frisk
Wide scampering snatches up the drifted snow
With ivory teeth, or ploughs it with his snout; 50
Then shakes his powdered coat, and barks for joy.
Heedless of all his pranks, the sturdy churl

Moves right toward the mark ; nor stops for aught
 But now and then with pressure of his thumb
 To adjust the fragrant charge of a short tube
 That fumes beneath his nose : the trailing cloud
 Streams far behind him, scenting all the air.
 Now from the roost, or from the neighbouring pale,
 Where, diligent to catch the first faint gleam
 Of smiling day, they gossiped side by side, 60
 Come trooping at the housewife's well-known call
 The feathered tribes domestic. Half on wing
 And half on foot, they brush the fleecy flood,
 Conscious, and fearful of too deep a plunge.
 The sparrows peep, and quit the sheltering eaves
 To seize the fair occasion. Well they eye
 The scattered grain, and, thievishly resolved
 To escape the impending famine, often scared
 As oft return, a pert voracious kind.
 Clean riddance quickly made, one only care 70
 Remains to each, the search of sunny nook,
 Or shed impervious to the blast. Resigned
 To sad necessity, the cock forgoes
 His wonted strut, and, wading at their head
 With well-considered steps, seems to resent
 His altered gait and stateliness retrenched.
 How find the myriads that in summer cheer
 The hills and valleys with their ceaseless songs
 Due sustenance, or where subsist they now ?
 Earth yields them nought : the imprisoned worm is safe 80
 Beneath the frozen clod ; all seeds of herbs
 Lie covered close ; and berry-bearing thorns
 That feed the thrush (whatever some suppose)
 Afford the smaller minstrels no supply.
 The long-protracted rigour of the year
 Thins all their numerous flocks. In chinks and holes
 Ten thousand seek an unmolested end,
 As instinct prompts, self-buried ere they die.
 The very rooks and daws forsake the fields,
 Where neither grub nor root nor earth-nut now 90
 Repays their labour more ; and, perched aloft
 By the wayside, or stalking in the path,
 Lean pensioners upon the traveller's track,
 Pick up their nauseous dole, though sweet to them,
 Of voided pulse or half-digested grain.
 The streams are lost amid the splendid blank
 O'erwhelming all distinction. On the flood
 Indurated and fixed the snowy weight
 Lies undissolved, while silently beneath,

And unperceived, the current steals away. 100
Not so, where scornful of a check it leaps
The mill-dam, dashes on the restless wheel,
And wantons in the pebbly gulf below :
No frost can bind it there ; its utmost force
Can but arrest the light and smoky mist
That in its fall the liquid sheet throws wide.
And see where it has hung the embroidered banks
With forms so various, that no powers of art,
The pencil or the pen, may trace the scene !
Here glittering turrets rise, upbearing high 110
(Fantastic misarrangement !) on the roof
Large growth of what may seem the sparkling trees
And shrubs of fairy land. The crystal drops
That trickle down the branches, fast congealed,
Shoot into pillars of pellucid length,
And prop the pile they but adorned before.
Here grotto within grotto safe defies
The sunbeam ; there embossed and fretted wild
The growing wonder takes a thousand shapes
Capricious, in which fancy seeks in vain 120
The likeness of some object seen before.
Thus nature works as if to mock at art,
And in defiance of her rival powers ;
By these fortuitous and random strokes
Performing such inimitable feats,
As she with all her rules can never reach.
Less worthy of applause, though more admired
Because a novelty the work of man,
Imperial mistress of the fur-clad Russ !
Thy most magnificent and mighty freak, 130
The wonder of the North. No forest fell
When thou wouldst build ; no quarry sent its stores
To enrich thy walls ; but thou didst hew the floods,
And make thy marble of the glassy wave.
In such a palace Aristæus found
Cyrene, when he bore the plaintive tale
Of his lost bees to her maternal ear :
In such a palace poetry might place
The armoury of Winter ; where his troops,
The gloomy clouds, find weapons, arrowy sleet, 140
Skin-piercing volley, blossom-bruising hail,
And snow that often blinds the traveller's course,
And wraps him in an unexpected tomb.
Silently as a dream the fabric rose ;
No sound of hammer or of saw was there.
Ice upon ice, the well-adjusted parts

Were soon conjoined, nor other cement asked
 Than water interfused to make them one.
 Lamps gracefully disposed, and of all hues,
 Illumined every side ; a watery light 150
 Gleamed through the clear transparency, that seemed
 Another moon new risen, or meteor fallen
 From heaven to earth, of lambent flame serene.
 So stood the brittle prodigy ; though smooth
 And slippery the materials, yet frostbound
 Firm as a rock. Nor wanted aught within,
 That royal residence might well befit,
 For grandeur or for use. Long wavy wreaths
 Of flowers, that feared no enemy but warmth,
 Blushed on the panels. Mirror needed none 160
 Where all was vitreous ; but in order due
 Convivial table and commodious seat
 (What seemed at least commodious seat) were there,
 Sofa and couch and high-built throne august.
 The same lubricity was found in all,
 And all was moist to the warm touch ; a scene
 Of evanescent glory, once a stream,
 And soon to slide into a stream again.
 Alas ! 'twas but a mortifying stroke
 Of undesigned severity, that glanced 170
 (Made by a monarch) on her own estate,
 On human grandeur and the courts of kings.
 'Twas transient in its nature, as in show
 'Twas durable ; as worthless as it seemed
 Intrinsically precious ; to the foot
 Treacherous and false ; it smiled, and it was cold.
 Great princes have great playthings. Some have played
 At hewing mountains into men, and some
 At building human wonders mountain high.
 Some have amused the dull sad years of life, 180
 Life spent in indolence and therefore sad,
 With schemes of monumental fame ; and sought
 By pyramids and mausolean pomp,
 Short-lived themselves, to immortalize their bones.
 Some seek diversion in the tented field,
 And make the sorrows of mankind their sport.
 But war's a game, which, were their subjects wise,
 Kings should not play at. Nations would do well
 To extort their truncheons from the puny hands
 Of heroes, whose infirm and baby minds 190
 Are gratified with mischief, and who spoil,
 Because men suffer it, their toy the world.
 When Babel was confounded, and the great

STOP

Confederacy of projectors wild and vain
Was split into diversity of tongues,
Then, as a shepherd separates his flock,
These to the upland, to the valley those,
God drave asunder and assigned their lot
To all the nations. Ample was the boon
He gave them, in its distribution fair 200
And equal, and he bade them dwell in peace.
Peace was awhile their care : they ploughed and sowed,
And reaped their plenty without grudge or strife.
But violence can never longer sleep
Than human passions please. In every heart
Are sown the sparks that kindle fiery war ;
Occasion needs but fan them, and they blaze.
Cain had already shed a brother's blood ;
The Deluge washed it out, but left unquenched
The seeds of murder in the breast of man. 210
Soon, by a righteous judgment, in the line
Of his descending progeny was found
The first artificer of death ; the shrewd
Contriver who first sweated at the forge
And forced the blunt and yet unbloodied steel
To a keen edge, and made it bright for war.
Him, Tubal named, the Vulcan of old times,
The sword and falchion their inventor claim,
And the first smith was the first murderer's son.
His art survived the waters ; and ere long, 220
When man was multiplied and spread abroad
In tribes and clans, and had begun to call
These meadows and that range of hills his own,
The tasted sweets of property begat
Desire of more ; and industry in some
To improve and cultivate their just demesne,
Made others covet what they saw so fair.
Thus war began on earth ; these fought for spoil,
And those in self-defence. Savage at first
The onset, and irregular. At length 230
One eminent above the rest, for strength,
For stratagem, or courage, or for all,
Was chosen leader ; him they served in war,
And him in peace for sake of warlike deeds
Reverenced no less. Who could with him compare ?
Or who so worthy to control themselves
As he whose prowess had subdued their foes ?
Thus war, affording field for the display
Of virtue, made one chief, whom times of peace,
Which have their exigencies too, and call 240

For skill in government, at length made king.
 King was a name too proud for man to wear
 With modesty and meekness; and the crown,
 So dazzling in their eyes who set it on,
 Was sure to intoxicate the brows it bound.
 It is the abject property of most
 That, being parcel of the common mass,
 And destitute of means to raise themselves,
 They sink and settle lower than they need.
 They know not what it is to feel within 250
 A comprehensive faculty that grasps
 Great purposes with ease, that turns and wields,
 Almost without an effort, plans too vast
 For their conception, which they cannot move.
 Conscious of impotence they soon grow drunk
 With gazing when they see an able man
 Step forth to notice; and, besotted thus,
 Build him a pedestal, and say, "Stand there,
 And be our admiration and our praise."
 They roll themselves before him in the dust, 260
 Then most deserving in their own account
 When most extravagant in his applause,
 As if exalting him they raised themselves.
 Thus by degrees, self-cheated of their sound
 And sober judgment that he is but man,
 They demi-deify and fume him so
 That in due season he forgets it too.
 Inflated and astrut with self-conceit
 He gulps the windy diet, and ere long,
 Adopting their mistake, profoundly thinks 270
 The world was made in vain, if not for him.
 Thenceforth they are his cattle: drudges born
 To bear his burdens, drawing in his gears
 And sweating in his service. His caprice
 Becomes the soul that animates them all.
 He déems a thousand, or ten thousand lives,
 Spent in the purchase of renown for him,
 An easy reckoning, and they think the same.
 Thus kings were first invented, and thus kings
 Were burnished into heroes, and became 280
 The arbiters of this terraqueous swamp,
 Storks among frogs that have but croaked and died.
 Strange, that such folly as lifts bloated man
 To eminence fit only for a god
 Should ever drivel out of human lips,
 Even in the cradled weakness of the world!
 Still stranger much, that when at length mankind

Had reached the sinewy firmness of their youth,
And could discriminate and argue well
On subjects more mysterious, they were yet 290
Babes in the cause of freedom, and should fear
And quake before the gods themselves had made !
But above measure strange, that neither proof
Of sad experience, nor examples set
By some whose patriot virtue has prevailed,
Can even now, when they are grown mature
In wisdom, and with philosophic deeps
Familiar, serve to emancipate the rest !
Such dupes are men to custom, and so prone
To reverence what is ancient, and can plead 300
A course of long observance for its use,
That even servitude, the worst of ills,
Because delivered down from sire to son,
Is kept and guarded as a sacred thing.
But is it fit, or can it bear the shock
Of rational discussion, that a man,
Compounded and made up like other men
Of elements tumultuous, in whom lust
And folly in as ample measure meet
As in the bosoms of the slaves he rules, 310
Should be a despot absolute, and boast
Himself the only freeman of his land ?
Should, when he pleases, and on whom he will,
Wage war, with any or with no pretence
Of provocation given or wrong sustained,
And force the beggarly last doit, by means
That his own humour dictates, from the clutch
Of poverty, that thus he may procure
His thousands weary of penurious life
A splendid opportunity to die ? 320
Say ye, who (with less prudence than of old
Jotham ascribed to his assembled trees
In politic convention) put your trust
In the shadow of a bramble, and, reclined
In fancied peace beneath his dangerous branch,
Rejoice in him, and celebrate his sway,
Where find ye passive fortitude ? Whence springs
Your self-denying zeal that holds it good
To stroke the prickly grievance, and to hang
His thorns with streamers of continual praise ? 330
We too are friends to loyalty. We love
The king who loves the law, respects his bounds,
And reigns content within them : him we serve
Freely and with delight, who leaves us free :

But, recollecting still that he is man,
 We trust him not too far. King though he be,
 And king in England too, he may be weak
 And vain enough to be ambitious still,
 May exercise amiss his proper powers,
 Or covet more than freemen choose to grant : 340
 Beyond that mark is treason. He is ours,
 To administer, to guard, to adorn the State,
 But not to warp or change it. We are his,
 To serve him nobly in the common cause
 True to the death, but not to be his slaves.
 Mark now the difference, ye that boast your love
 Of kings, between your loyalty and ours :
 We love the man, the paltry pageant you ;
 We the chief patron of the commonwealth,
 You the regardless author of its woes ; 350
 We, for the sake of liberty, a king,
 You chains and bondage for a tyrant's sake.
 Our love is principle, and has its root
 In reason, is judicious, manly, free ;
 Yours, a blind instinct, crouches to the rod,
 And licks the foot that treads it in the dust.
 Were kingship as true treasure as it seems,
 Sterling, and worthy of a wise man's wish,
 I would not be a king to be beloved
 Causeless, and daubed with undiscerning praise, 360
 Where love is mere attachment to the throne,
 Not to the man who fills it as he ought.

Whose freedom is by sufferance, and at will
 Of a superior, he is never free.
 Who lives, and is not weary of a life
 Exposed to manacles, deserves them well.
 The State that strives for liberty, though foiled,
 And forced to abandon what she bravely sought,
 Deserves at least applause for her attempt,
 And pity for her loss. But that's a cause 370
 Not often unsuccessful ; power usurped
 Is weakness when opposed ; conscious of wrong
 'Tis pusillanimous and prone to flight.
 But slaves, that once conceive the glowing thought
 Of freedom, in that hope itself possess
 All that the contest calls for ; spirit, strength,
 The scorn of danger, and united hearts,
 The surest presage of the good they seek.*

* The author hopes that he shall not be censured for unnecessary warmth upon so interesting a subject. He is aware that it is become almost fashionable to stigmatize such sentiments as no better than empty declamation ; but it is an ill symptom, and peculiar to modern times.

Then shame to manhood, and opprobrious more
To France than all her losses and defeats, 380
Old or of later date, by sea or land,
Her house of bondage, worse than that of old
Which God avenged on Pharaoh—the Bastille.
Ye horrid towers, the abode of broken hearts,
Ye dungeons, and ye cages of despair,
That monarchs have supplied from age to age
With music such as suits their sovereign ears,
The sighs and groans of miserable men!
There's not an English heart that would not leap
To hear that ye were fallen at last; to know 390
That even our enemies, so oft employed
In forging chains for us, themselves were free.
For he that values liberty confines
His zeal for her predominance within
No narrow bounds; her cause engages him
Wherever pleaded. 'Tis the cause of man.
There dwell the most forlorn of human kind,
Immured though unaccused, condemned untried,
Cruelly spared, and hopeless of escape.
There, like the visionary emblem seen 400
By him of Babylon, life stands a stump,
And, filleted about with hoops of brass,
Still lives, though all its pleasant boughs are gone.
To count the hour-bell, and expect no change;
And ever, as the sullen sound is heard,
Still to reflect that, though a joyless note
To him whose moments all have one dull pace,
Ten thousand rovers in the world at large
Account it music; that it summons some
To theatre or jocund feast or ball; 410
The wearied hireling finds it a release
From labour; and the lover, who has chid
Its long delay, feels every welcome stroke
Upon his heart-strings trembling with delight;
To fly for refuge from distracting thought
To such amusements as ingenious woe
Contrives, hard shifting and without her tools;
To read engraven on the mouldy walls,
In staggering types, his predecessor's tale,
A sad memorial, and subjoin his own; 420
To turn purveyor to an overgorged
And bloated spider, till the pampered pest
Is made familiar, watches his approach,
Comes at his call, and serves him for a friend;
To wear out time in numbering to and fro

The studs that thick emboss his iron door,
 Then downward, and then upward, then aslant,
 And then alternate, with a sickly hope
 By dint of change to give his tasteless task
 Some relish, till the sum exactly found 430
 In all directions, he begins again :—
 Oh comfortless existence ! hemmed around
 With woes, which who that suffers would not kneel
 And beg for exile, or the pangs of death ?
 That man should thus encroach on fellow-man,
 Abridge him of his just and native rights,
 Eradicate him, tear him from his hold
 Upon the endearments of domestic life
 And social, nip his fruitfulness and use,
 And doom him for perhaps a heedless word 440
 To barrenness, and solitude, and tears,
 Moves indignation, makes the name of king
 (Of king whom such prerogative can please)
 As dreadful as the Manichean God,
 Adored through fear, strong only to destroy.
 'Tis liberty alone that gives the flower
 Of fleeting life its lustre and perfume,
 And we are weeds without it. All constraint,
 Except what wisdom lays on evil men,
 Is evil ; hurts the faculties, impedes 450
 Their progress in the road of science ; blinds
 The eyesight of discovery, and begets,
 In those that suffer it, a sordid mind
 Bestial, a meagre intellect, unfit
 To be the tenant of man's noble form.
 Thee therefore still, blameworthy as thou art,
 With all thy loss of empire, and though squeezed
 By public exigence till annual food
 Fails for the craving hunger of the State,
 Thee I account still happy, and the chief 460
 Among the nations, seeing thou art free,
 My native nook of earth ! Thy clime is rude,
 Replete with vapours, and disposes much
 All hearts to sadness, and none more than mine ;
 Thine unadulterate manners are less soft
 And plausible than social life requires,
 And thou hast need of discipline and art
 To give thee what politer France receives
 From nature's bounty—that humane address
 And sweetness, without which no pleasure is 470
 In converse, either starved by cold reserve,
 Or flushed with fierce dispute, a senseless brawl ;

Yet being free I love thee : for the sake
 Of that one feature can be well content,
 Disgraced as thou hast been, poor as thou art,
 To seek no sublunary rest beside.

But once enslaved, farewell ! I could endure
 Chains nowhere patiently, and chains at home,
 Where I am free by birthright, not at all.

Then what were left of roughness in the grain 480
 Of British natures, wanting its excuse

That it belongs to freemen, would disgust
 And shock me. I should then with double pain
 Feel all the rigour of thy fickle clime ;

And, if I must bewail the blessing lost
 For which our Hampdens and our Sidneys bled,
 I would at least bewail it under skies

Milder, among a people less austere,
 In scenes which, having never known me free,
 Would not reproach me with the loss I felt. 490

Do I forebode impossible events,
 And tremble at vain dreams ? Heaven grant I may !

But the age of virtuous politics is past,
 And we are deep in that of cold pretence.

Patriots are grown too shrewd to be sincere, ✓

And we too wise to trust them. He that takes
 Deep in his soft credulity the stamp

Designed by loud declaimers on the part
 Of liberty, themselves the slaves of lust,
 Incurs derision for his easy faith 500

And lack of knowledge, and with cause enough :

For when was public virtue to be found

Where private was not ? Can he love the whole

Who loves no part ? He be a nation's friend

✓ Who is, in truth, the friend of no man there ?

Can he be strenuous in his country's cause

Who slights the charities for whose dear sake

That country, if at all, must be beloved ?

'Tis therefore sober and good men are sad 510
 For England's glory, seeing it wax pale

And sickly, while her champions wear their hearts

So loose to private duty that no brain,

Healthful and undisturbed by factious fumes,

Can dream them trusty to the general weal.

Such were not they of old whose tempered blades

Dispersed the shackles of usurped control,

And hewed them link from link. Then Albion's sons

Were sons indeed ; they felt a filial heart

Beat high within them at a mother's wrongs,

And shining each in his domestic sphere 520
 Shone brighter still once called to public view.
 'Tis therefore many, whose sequestered lot
 Forbids their interference, looking on,
 Anticipate perforce some dire event ;
 And, seeing the old castle of the State
 That promised once more firmness, so assailed
 That all its tempest-beaten turrets shake,
 Stand motionless, expectants of its fall.
 All has its date below ; the fatal hour
 Was registered in heaven ere time began. 530
 We turn to dust, and all our mightiest works
 Die too : the deep foundations that we lay,
 Time ploughs them up, and not a trace remains.
 We build with what we deem eternal rock ;
 A distant age asks where the fabric stood ;
 And in the dust, sifted and searched in vain,
 The undiscoverable secret sleeps.
 But there is yet a liberty unsung
 By poets, and by senators unpraised,
 Which monarchs cannot grant, nor all the powers 540
 Of earth and hell confederate take away ;
 A liberty which persecution, fraud,
 Oppression, prisons, have no power to bind ;
 Which whoso tastes can be enslaved no more.
 'Tis liberty of heart, derived from Heaven,
 Bought with his blood who gave it to mankind,
 And sealed with the same token. It is held
 By charter, and that charter sanctioned sure
 By the unimpeachable and awful oath
 And promise of a God. His other gifts 550
 All bear the royal stamp that speaks them his,
 And are august, but this transcends them all.
 His other works, this visible display
 Of all-creating energy and might,
 Are grand, no doubt, and worthy of the Word
 That, finding an interminable space
 Unoccupied, has filled the void so well,
 And made so sparkling what was dark before.
 But these are not his glory. Man, 'tis true,
 Smit with the beauty of so fair a scene, 560
 Might well suppose the Artificer divine
 Meant it eternal, had he not himself
 Pronounced it transient, glorious as it is,
 And, still designing a more glorious far,
 Doomed it as insufficient for his praise.
 These therefore are occasional, and pass ;

Formed for the confutation of the fool,
Whose lying heart disputes against a God ;
That office served, they must be swept away.
Not so the labours of his love : they shine 570
In other heavens than these that we behold,
And fade not. There is paradise that fears
No forfeiture, and of its fruits he sends
Large prelibation oft to saints below.
Of these the first in order, and the pledge
And confident assurance of the rest,
Is liberty ; a flight into his arms,
Ere yet mortality's fine threads give way,
A clear escape from tyrannizing lust,
And full immunity from penal woe. 580

Chains are the portion of revolted man,
Stripes, and a dungeon ; and his body serves
The triple purpose. In that sickly, foul,
Opprobrious residence he finds them all.
Propense his heart to idols, he is held
In silly dotage on created things,
Careless of their Creator. And that low
And sordid gravitation of his powers
To a vile clod so draws him, with such force
Resistless, from the centre he should seek, 590
That he at last forgets it. All his hopes
Tend downwards ; his ambition is to sink,
To reach a depth profounder still, and still
Profounder, in the fathomless abyss
Of folly, plunging in pursuit of death.
But ere he gain the comfortless repose
He seeks, an acquiescence of his soul
In heaven-renouncing exile, he endures—
What does he not ? from lusts opposed in vain,
And self-reproaching conscience. He foresees 600
The fatal issue to his health, fame, peace,
Fortune and dignity ; the loss of all
That can ennoble man, and make frail life,
Short as it is, supportable. Still worse,
Far worse than all the plagues with which his sins
Infect his happiest moments, he forebodes
Ages of hopeless misery ; future death,
And death still future : not an hasty stroke
Like that which sends him to the dusty grave,
But unrepealable enduring death. 610
Scripture is still a trumpet to his fears :
What none can prove a forgery may be true ;
What none but bad men wish exploded must.

That scruple checks him. Riot is not loud
 Nor drunk enough to drown it. In the midst
 Of laughter his compunctions are sincere,
 And he abhors the jest by which he shines.
 Remorse begets reform. His master-lust
 Falls first before his resolute rebuke,
 And seems dethroned and vanquished. Peace ensues, 620
 But spurious and short-lived, the puny child
 Of self-congratulating pride, begot
 On fancied innocence. Again he falls,
 And fights again ; but finds his best essay
 A presage ominous, portending still
 Its own dishonour by a worse relapse,
 Till nature, unavailing nature, foiled
 So oft, and wearied in the vain attempt,
 Scoffs at her own performance. Reason now
 Takes part with appetite, and pleads the cause 630
 Perversely, which of late she so condemned ;
 With shallow shifts and old devices, worn
 And tattered in the service of debauch,
 Covering his shame from his offended sight.

“ Hath God indeed given appetites to man,
 And stored the earth so plenteously with means
 To gratify the hunger of his wish,
 And doth he reprobate, and will he damn,
 The use of his own bounty ? making first
 So frail a kind, and then enacting laws 640
 So strict that less than perfect must despair ?
 Falsehood ! which whoso but suspects of truth
 Dishonours God, and makes a slave of man.
 Do they themselves, who undertake for hire
 The teacher’s office, and dispense at large
 Their weekly dole of edifying strains,
 Attend to their own music ? Have they faith
 In what with such solemnity of tone
 And gesture they propound to our belief ?
 Nay,—conduct hath the loudest tongue. The voice 650
 Is but an instrument on which the priest
 May play what tune he pleases. In the deed,
 The unequivocal authentic deed,
 We find sound argument, we read the heart.”

Such reasonings (if that name must needs belong
 To excuses in which reason has no part)
 Serve to compose a spirit well inclined
 To live on terms of amity with vice,
 And sin without disturbance. Often urged,
 (As often as, libidinous discourse 660

Exhausted, he resorts to solemn themes
 Of theological and grave import,)
 They gain at last his unreserved assent ;
 Till hardened his heart's temper in the forge
 Of lust, and on the anvil of despair,
 He slights the strokes of conscience. Nothing moves,
 Or nothing much, his constancy in ill ;
 Vain tampering has but fostered his disease ;
 'Tis desperate, and he sleeps the sleep of death.

670

Haste now, philosopher, and set him free.
 Charm the deaf serpent wisely. Make him hear
 Of rectitude and fitness ; moral truth
 How lovely, and the moral sense how sure,
 Consulted and obeyed, to guide his steps
 Directly to THE FIRST AND ONLY FAIR.
 Spare not in such a cause. Spend all the powers
 Of rant and rhapsody in virtue's praise ;
 Be most sublimely good, verbosely grand,
 And with poetic trappings grace thy prose
 Till it outmantle all the pride of verse.—

680

Ah, tinkling cymbal and high-sounding brass,
 Smitten in vain ! such music cannot charm
 The eclipse that intercepts truth's heavenly beam,
 And chills and darkens a wide wandering soul.
 The still small voice is wanted. He must speak
 Whose word leaps forth at once to its effect,
 Who calls for things that are not, and they come.

Grace makes the slave a freeman. 'Tis a change
 That turns to ridicule the turgid speech
 And stately tone of moralists who boast
 As if, like him of fabulous renown,
 They had indeed ability to smoothe
 The shag of savage nature, and were each
 An Orpheus, and omnipotent in song ;
 But transformation of apostate man
 From fool to wise, from earthly to divine,
 Is work for him that made him. He alone,
 And he by means in philosophic eyes
 Trivial and worthy of disdain, achieves
 The wonder ; humanizing what is brute
 In the lost kind, extracting from the lips
 Of asps their venom, overpowering strength
 By weakness, and hostility by love.

690

700

Patriots have toiled, and in their country's cause
 Bled nobly ; and their deeds, as they deserve,
 Receive proud recompense. We give in charge
 Their names to the sweet lyre. The historic Muse,

Proud of the treasure, marches with it down
 To latest times ; and sculpture, in her turn,
 Gives bond in stone and ever-during brass 710
 To guard them, and to immortalize her trust.
 But fairer wreaths are due, though never paid,
 To those who, posted at the shrine of truth,
 Have fallen in her defence. A patriot's blood,
 Well spent in such a strife, may earn indeed,
 And for a time ensure to his loved land,
 The sweets of liberty and equal laws ;
 But martyrs struggle for a brighter prize,
 And win it with more pain. Their blood is shed
 In confirmation of the noblest claim, 720
 Our claim to feed upon immortal truth,
 To walk with God, to be divinely free,
 To soar, and to anticipate the skies.
 Yet few remember them. They lived unknown
 Till persecution dragged them into fame,
 And chased them up to heaven. Their ashes flew—
 No marble tells us whither. With their names
 No bard embalms and sanctifies his song ;
 And history, so warm on meaner themes,
 Is cold on this. She execrates indeed 730
 The tyranny that doomed them to the fire,
 But gives the glorious sufferers little praise.*
 He is the freeman whom the truth makes free,
 And all are slaves beside. There's not a chain
 That hellish foes confederate for his harm
 Can wind around him, but he casts it off
 With as much ease as Samson his green withes.
 He looks abroad into the varied field
 Of nature, and though poor perhaps compared
 With those whose mansions glitter in his sight 740
 Calls the delightful scenery all his own.
 His are the mountains, and the valleys his,
 And the resplendent rivers. His to enjoy
 With a propriety that none can feel
 But who, with filial confidence inspired,
 Can lift to heaven an unpresumptuous eye,
 And smiling say—" My Father made them all !"
 Are they not his by a peculiar right,
 And by an emphasis of interest his,
 Whose eye they fill with tears of holy joy, 750
 Whose heart with praise, and whose exalted mind
 With worthy thoughts of that unwearied love
 That planned, and built, and still upholds a world

* See Hume.

So clothed with beauty, for rebellious man ?
 Yes—ye may fill your garners, ye that reap
 The loaded soil, and ye may waste much good
 In senseless riot ; but ye will not find
 In feast or in the chase, in song or dance,
 A liberty like his who unimpeached
 Of usurpation, and to no man's wrong, 760
 Appropriates nature as his Father's work,
 And has a richer use of yours than you.
 He is indeed a freeman ; free by birth
 Of no mean city planned or ere the hills
 Were built, the fountains opened, or the sea
 With all his roaring multitude of waves.
 His freedom is the same in every State,
 And no condition of this changeful life,
 So manifold in cares, whose every day
 Brings its own evil with it, makes it less : 770
 For he has wings that neither sickness, pain,
 Nor penury, can cripple or confine.
 No nook so narrow but he spreads them there
 With ease, and is at large. The oppressor holds
 His body bound, but knows not what a range
 His spirit takes unconscious of a chain,
 And that to bind him is a vain attempt
 Whom God delights in, and in whom he dwells.

Acquaint thyself with God, if thou wouldst taste
 His works. Admitted once to his embrace, 780
 Thou shalt perceive that thou wast blind before ;
 Thine eye shall be instructed, and thine heart,
 Made pure, shall relish with divine delight,
 Till then unfelt, what hands divine have wrought.
 Brutes graze the mountain-top with faces prone
 And eyes intent upon the scanty herb
 It yields them ; or, recumbent on its brow,
 Ruminates heedless of the scene outspread
 Beneath, beyond, and stretching far away
 From inland regions to the distant main. 790
 Man views it and admires, but rests content
 With what he views. The landscape has his praise,
 But not its Author. Unconcerned who formed
 The paradise he sees, he finds it such ;
 And, such well-pleased to find it, asks no more.
 Not so the mind that has been touched from Heaven,
 And in the school of sacred wisdom taught
 To read his wonders in whose thought the world,
 Fair as it is, existed ere it was.
 Not for its own sake merely, but for his 800

Much more who fashioned it, he gives it praise ;
 Praise that from earth resulting, as it ought,
 To earth's acknowledged Sovereign, finds at once
 Its only just proprietor in him.

The soul that sees him, or receives sublimed
 New faculties, or learns at least to employ
 More worthily the powers she owned before,
 Discerns in all things what, with stupid gaze
 Of ignorance, till then she overlooked,

A ray of heavenly light gilding all forms
 Terrestrial, in the vast and the minute
 The unambiguous footsteps of the God
 Who gives its lustre to an insect's wing,
 And wheels his throne upon the rolling worlds.

810

Much conversant with Heaven, she often holds
 With those fair ministers of light to man
 That fill the skies nightly with silent pomp
 Sweet conference ; enquires what strains were they
 With which heaven rang, when every star, in haste
 To gratulate the new-created earth,

820

Sent forth a voice, and all the sons of God
 Shouted for joy.—“ Tell me, ye shining hosts
 That navigate a sea that knows no storms,
 Beneath a vault unsullied with a cloud,
 If from your elevation, whence ye view
 Distinctly scenes invisible to man,

And systems of whose birth no tidings yet
 Have reached this nether world, ye spy a race
 Favoured as ours, transgressors from the womb
 And hasting to a grave, yet doomed to rise,
 And to possess a brighter heaven than yours ?

830

As one who long detained on foreign shores
 Pants to return, and when he sees afar
 His country's weather-bleached and battered rocks
 From the green wave emerging, darts an eye
 Radiant with joy towards the happy land,
 So I with animated hopes behold,

And many an aching wish, your beamy fires,
 That show like beacons in the blue abyss
 Ordained to guide the embodied spirit home
 From toilsome life to never-ending rest.

840

Love kindles as I gaze. I feel desires
 That give assurance of their own success,
 And that, infused from Heaven, must thither tend.”

So reads he nature whom the lamp of truth
 Illuminates. Thy lamp, mysterious Word !
 Which whoso sees, no longer wanders lost,

With intellects bemazed in endless doubt,
But runs the road of wisdom. Thou hast built,
With means that were not till by thee employed, 850
Worlds that had never been hadst Thou in strength
Been less, or less benevolent than strong.
They are thy witnesses, who speak thy power
And goodness infinite, but speak in ears
That hear not or receive not their report.
In vain thy creatures testify of thee
Till Thou proclaim thyself. Theirs is indeed
A teaching voice ; but 'tis the praise of thine
That whom it teaches it makes prompt to learn,
And with the boon gives talents for its use. 860
Till Thou art heard, imaginations vain
Possess the heart, and fables false as hell,
Yet deemed oracular, lure down to death
The uninformed and heedless souls of men.
We give to chance, blind chance, ourselves as blind,
The glory of thy work, which yet appears
Perfect and unimpeachable of blame,
Challenging human scrutiny, and proved
Then skilful most when most severely judged.
But chance is not ; or is not where Thou reignest : 870
Thy Providence forbids that fickle power
(If power she be that works but to confound)
To mix her wild vagaries with thy laws.
Yet thus we dote, refusing, while we can,
Instruction, and inventing to ourselves
Gods such as guilt makes welcome ; gods that sleep,
Or disregard our follies, or that sit
Amused spectators of this bustling stage.
Thee we reject, unable to abide
Thy purity, till, pure as Thou art pure, 880
Made such by thee, we love thee for that cause
For which we shunned and hated thee before.
Then we are free : then liberty like day
Breaks on the soul, and by a flash from heaven
Fires all the faculties with glorious joy.
A voice is heard that mortal ears hear not
Till Thou hast touched them ; 'tis the voice of song,
A loud Hosanna sent from all thy works,
Which he that hears it with a shout repeats,
And adds his rapture to the general praise. 890
In that blest moment, Nature throwing wide
Her veil opaque, discloses with a smile
The Author of her beauties, who, retired
Behind his own creation, works unseen

By the impure, and hears his power denied.
 Thou art the source and centre of all minds,
 Their only point of rest, Eternal Word !
 From thee departing, they are lost and rove
 At random, without honour, hope, or peace.
 From thee is all that soothes the life of man,
 His high endeavour, and his glad success,
 His strength to suffer, and his will to serve.
 But oh, Thou bounteous Giver of all good !
 Thou art of all thy gifts thyself the crown !
 Give what Thou canst, without thee we are poor ;
 And with thee rich, take what Thou wilt away.

900

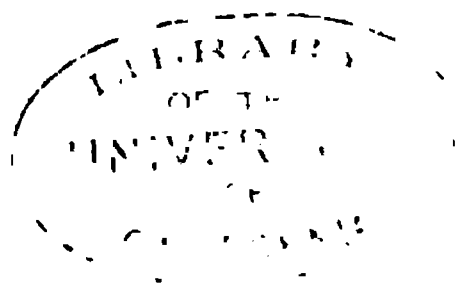
BOOK VI

THE WINTER WALK AT NOON

ARGUMENT.—Bells at a distance—Their effect—A fine noon in winter—A sheltered walk—Meditation better than books—Our familiarity with the course of nature makes it appear less wonderful than it is—The transformation that spring effects in a shrubbery described—A mistake concerning the course of nature corrected—God maintains it by an unremitted act—The amusements fashionable at this hour of the day reprov'd—Animals happy, a delightful sight—Origin of cruelty to animals—That it is a great crime proved from Scripture—That proof illustrated by a tale—A line drawn between the lawful and unlawful destruction of them—Their good and useful properties insisted on—Apology for the encomiums bestowed by the author upon animals—Instances of man's extravagant praise of man—The groans of the creation shall have an end—A view taken of the restoration of all things—An invocation and an invitation of Him who shall bring it to pass—The retired man vindicated from the charge of uselessness—Conclusion.

THERE is in souls a sympathy with sounds,
 And as the mind is pitched the ear is pleased
 With melting airs or martial, brisk or grave :
 Some chord in unison with what we hear
 Is touched within us, and the heart replies.
 How soft the music of those village bells
 Falling at intervals upon the ear
 In cadence sweet ! now dying all away,
 Now pealing loud again and louder still,

THE VALLEY OF THE OUSE AT OLNEY
FROM AN ENGRAVING BY GOODALL AFTER A DRAWING BY W. HARVEY



Clear and sonorous, as the gale comes on.
With easy force it opens all the cells
Where memory slept. Wherever I have heard
A kindred melody, the scene recurs,
And with it all its pleasures and its pains.
Such comprehensive views the spirit takes,
That in a few short moments I retrace
(As in a map the voyager his course)
The windings of my way through many years.
Short as in retrospect the journey seems,
It seemed not always short; the rugged path,
And prospect oft so dreary and forlorn,
Moved many a sigh at its disheartening length.
Yet feeling present evils while the past
Faintly impress the mind or not at all
How readily we wish time spent revoked,
That we might try the ground again, where once
(Through inexperience as we now perceive)
We missed that happiness we might have found!
Some friend is gone, perhaps his son's best friend
A father, whose authority, in show
When most severe, and mustering all its force,
Was but the graver countenance of love;
Whose favour, like the clouds of spring, might lower,
And utter now and then an awful voice,
But had a blessing in its darkest frown,
Threatening at once and nourishing the plant.
We loved, but not enough, the gentle hand
That reared us. At a thoughtless age allured
By every gilded folly, we renounced
His sheltering side, and wilfully forwent
That converse which we now in vain regret.
How gladly would the man recall to life
The boy's neglected sire! a mother too,
That softer friend, perhaps more gladly still,
Might he demand them at the gates of death.
Sorrow has, since they went, subdued and tamed
The playful humour; he could now endure
(Himself grown sober in the vale of tears)
And feel a parent's presence no restraint.
But not to understand a treasure's worth
Till time has stolen away the slighted good
Is cause of half the poverty we feel,
And makes the world the wilderness it is.
The few that pray at all pray oft amiss,
And, seeking grace to improve the prize they hold,
Would urge a wiser suit than asking more.

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The night was winter in his roughest mood,
 The morning sharp and clear. But now at noon,
 Upon the southern side of the slant hills,
 And where the woods fence off the northern blast, 60
 The season smiles, resigning all its rage,
 And has the warmth of May. The vault is blue
 Without a cloud, and white without a speck
 The dazzling splendour of the scene below.
 Again the harmony comes o'er the vale,
 And through the trees I view the embattled tower
 Whence all the music. I again perceive
 The soothing influence of the wafted strains,
 And settle in soft musings as I tread 70
 The walk, still verdant, under oaks and elms
 Whose outspread branches overarch the glade.
 The roof, though moveable through all its length
 As the wind sways it, has yet well sufficed,
 And intercepting in their silent fall
 The frequent flakes, has kept a path for me.
 No noise is here, or none that hinders thought.
 The redbreast warbles still, but is content
 With slender notes, and more than half suppressed :
 Pleased with his solitude, and flitting light 80
 From spray to spray, where'er he rests he shakes
 From many a twig the pendent drops of ice,
 That tinkle in the withered leaves below.
 Stillness, accompanied with sounds so soft,
 Charms more than silence. Meditation here
 May think down hours to moments. Here the heart
 May give a useful lesson to the head,
 And learning wiser grow without his books.
 Knowledge and wisdom, far from being one,
 Have oft-times no connexion. Knowledge dwells 90
 In heads replete with thoughts of other men,
 Wisdom in minds attentive to their own.
 Knowledge, a rude unprofitable mass,
 The mere materials with which wisdom builds,
 Till smoothed and squared and fitted to its place
 Does but encumber whom it seems to enrich.
 Knowledge is proud that he has learned so much ;
 Wisdom is humble that he knows no more.
 Books are not seldom talismans and spells,
 By which the magic art of shrewder wits
 Holds an unthinking multitude enthralled. 100
 Some to the fascination of a name
 Surrender judgment hoodwinked. Some the style
 Infatuates, and through labyrinths and wilds

Here the heart may
 give a useful lesson
 to the head
 And learning wiser
 grow without his books

e.g. Johnson
 JS Eliot

THE WINTER WALK AT NOON

Of error leads them, by a tune entranced.
While sloth seduces more, too weak to bear,
The insupportable fatigue of thought,
And swallowing therefore, without pause or choice,
The total grist unsifted, husks and all.
But trees, and rivulets whose rapid course
Defies the check of winter, haunts of deer, 110
And sheepwalks populous with bleating lambs,
And lanes in which the primrose ere her time
Peeps through the moss that clothes the hawthorn root,
Deceive no student. Wisdom there, and truth,
Not shy as in the world, and to be won
By slow solicitation, seize at once
The roving thought, and fix it on themselves.

What prodigies can power divine perform
More grand than it produces year by year,
And all in sight of inattentive man? 120
Familiar with the effect we slight the cause,
And in the constancy of nature's course,
The regular return of genial months,
And renovation of a faded world,
See nought to wonder at. Should God again,
As once in Gibeon, interrupt the race
Of the undeviating and punctual sun,
How would the world admire! But speaks it less
An agency divine, to make him know
His moment when to sink and when to rise, 130
Age after age, than to arrest his course?
All we behold is miracle, but seen
So duly, all is miracle in vain.

Where now the vital energy that moved,
While summer was, the pure and subtle lymph
Through the imperceptible meandering veins
Of leaf and flower? It sleeps: and the icy touch
Of unprolific winter has impressed
A cold stagnation on the intestine tide.
But let the months go round, a few short months, 140
And ~~all shall be restored~~. These naked shoots,
Barren as lances, along which the wind
Makes wintry music, sighing as it goes,
Shall put their graceful foliage on again,
And more aspiring, and with ampler spread,
Shall boast new charms, and more than they have lost.
Then each, in its peculiar honours clad,
Shall publish, even to the distant eye,
Its family and tribe. Laburnum rich
In streaming gold; syringa ivory-pure; 150

The scented and the scentless rose, this red
 And of an humbler growth, the other tall,*
 And throwing up into the darkest gloom
 Of neighbouring cypress, or more sable yew,
 Her silver globes, light as the foamy surf
 That the wind severs from the broken wave;
 The lilac various in array, now white,
 Now sanguine, and her beauteous head now set
 With purple spikes pyramidal, as if,
 Studious of ornament, yet unresolved /160
 Which hue she most approved, she chose them all;
 Copious of flowers the woodbine, pale and wan
 But well compensating her sickly looks
 With never cloying odours, early and late;
 Hypericum all bloom, so thick a swarm
 Of flowers like flies clothing her slender rods
 That scarce a leaf appears; mezereon too,
 Though leafless well attired, and thick beset
 With blushing wreaths investing every spray;
 Althæa with the purple eye; the broom, 170
 Yellow and bright as bullion unalloyed
 Her blossoms; and luxuriant above all
 The jasmine, throwing wide her elegant sweets,
 The deep dark green of whose unvarnished leaf
 Makes more conspicuous and illumines more
 The bright profusion of her scattered stars.—
 These have been, and these shall be in their day;
 And all this uniform uncoloured scene
 Shall be dismantled of its fleecy load,
 And flush into variety again. 180
 From dearth to plenty, and from ~~death to life~~.
 Is Nature's progress when she lectures man
 In heavenly truth; evincing, as she makes
 The grand transition, that there lives and works
 A soul in all things, and that soul is God.
 The beauties of the wilderness are his,
 That make so gay the solitary place
 Where no eye sees them. And the fairer forms,
 That cultivation glories in, are his.
 He sets the bright procession on its way, 190
 And marshals all the order of the year;
 He marks the bounds which winter may not pass,
 And blunts his pointed fury; in its case
 Russet and rude folds up the tender germ
 Uninjured, with inimitable art;
 And, ere one flowery season fades and dies,

* The Guelder Rose.

Designs the blooming wonders of the next.

Some say that in the origin of things,

When all creation started into birth,

The infant elements received a law

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From which they swerve not since. That under force

Deism Of that controlling ordinance they move,

And need not His immediate hand who first

Prescribed their course, to regulate it now.

Thus dream they, and contrive to save a God

The encumbrance of his own concerns, and spare

The great Artificer of all that moves

The stress of a continual act, the pain

Of unremitted vigilance and care,

As too laborious and severe a task.

So man, the moth, is not afraid, it seems,

To span Omnipotence, and measure might

That knows no measure by the scanty rule

And standard of his own, that is to-day,

And is not ere to-morrow's sun go down.

But how should matter occupy a charge,

Dull as it is, and satisfy a law

So vast in its demands, unless impelled

To ceaseless service by a ceaseless force,

And under pressure of some conscious cause?

~~The Lord of all himself through all diffused,~~

Sustains and is the life of all that lives.

Spinoza Nature is but a name for an effect

Whose cause is God. He feeds the secret fire

By which the mighty process is maintained,

Who sleeps not, is not weary; in whose sight

Slow-circling ages are as transient days;

Whose work is without labour; whose designs

No flaw deforms, no difficulty thwarts;

And whose beneficence no charge exhausts.

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Him blind antiquity profaned, not served,

With self-taught rites, and under various names,

Female and male, Pomona, Pales, Pan,

And Flora and Vertumnus; peopling earth

With tutelary goddesses and gods

That were not; and commending as they would

To each some province, garden, field or grove.

But all are under One. One spirit—His

Who wore the plaited thorns with bleeding brows—

Rules universal nature. Not a flower

240

But shows some touch in freckle, streak or stain,

Of his unrivalled pencil. He inspires

Their balmy odours and imparts their hues,

And bathes their eyes with nectar, and includes,
 In grains as countless as the seaside sands,
 The forms with which he sprinkles all the earth.
 Happy who walks with him ! whom what he finds
 Of flavour or of scent in fruit or flower,
 Or what he views of beautiful or grand
 In nature, from the broad majestic oak 250
 To the green blade that twinkles in the sun,
 Prompts with remembrance of a present God.
 His presence, who made all so fair, perceived,
 Makes all still fairer. As with him no scene
 Is dreary, so with him all seasons please.
 Though winter had been none, had man been true,
 And earth be punished for its tenant's sake,
 Yet not in vengeance ; as this smiling sky,
 So soon succeeding such an angry night,
 And these dissolving snows, and this clear stream 260
 Recovering fast its liquid music, prove.

Who then that has a mind well strung and tuned
 To contemplation, and within his reach
 A scene so friendly to his favourite task,
 Would waste attention at the chequered board,
 His host of wooden warriors to and fro
 Marching and countermarching, with an eye
 As fixed as marble, with a forehead ridged
 And furrowed into storms, and with a hand
 Trembling, as if eternity were hung 270
 In balance on his conduct of a pin ?
 Nor envies he aught more their idle sport
 Who pant with application misapplied
 To trivial toys, and, pushing ivory balls
 Across a velvet level, feel a joy
 Akin to rapture, when the bauble finds
 Its destined goal of difficult access.
 Nor deems he wiser him who gives his noon
 To miss, the mercer's plague, from shop to shop
 Wandering, and littering with unfolded silks 280
 The polished counter, and approving none,
 Or promising with smiles to call again.
 Nor him who, by his vanity seduced,
 And soothed into a dream that he discerns
 The difference of a Guido from a daub,
 Frequents the crowded auction. Stationed there
 As duly as the Langford of the show,
 With glass at eye, and catalogue in hand,
 And tongue accomplished in the fulsome cant
 And pedantry that coxcombs learn with ease, 290

Oft as the price-deciding hammer falls,
 He notes it in his book, then raps his box,
 Swears 'tis a bargain, rails at his hard fate
 That he has let it pass—but never bids.

Here unmolested, through whatever sign
 The sun proceeds, I wander; neither mist,
 Nor freezing sky nor sultry, checking me,
 Nor stranger intermeddling with my joy.
 Even in the spring and playtime of the year,
 That calls the unwonted villager abroad
 With all her little ones, a sportive train,
 To gather kingcups in the yellow mead,
 And prink their hair with daisies, or to pick
 A cheap but wholesome salad from the brook,
 These shades are all my own. The timorous hare,
 Grown so familiar with her frequent guest,
 Scarce shuns me; and the stockdove unalarmed
 Sits cooing in the pine-tree, nor suspends
 His long love-ditty for my near approach.
 Drawn from his refuge in some lonely elm
 That age or injury has hollowed deep,
 Where on his bed of wool and matted leaves
 He has outslept the winter, ventures forth
 To frisk awhile, and bask in the warm sun,
 The squirrel, flippant, pert, and full of play.
 He sees me, and at once, swift as a bird,
 Ascends the neighbouring beech; there whisks his brush,
 And perks his ears, and stamps and scolds aloud,
 With all the prettiness of feigned alarm
 And anger insignificantly fierce.

The heart is hard in nature, and unfit
 For human fellowship, as being void
 Of sympathy, and therefore dead alike
 To love and friendship both, that is not pleased
 With sight of animals enjoying life,
 Nor feels their happiness augment his own.
 The bounding fawn that darts across the glade
 When none pursues, through mere delight of heart
 And spirits buoyant with excess of glee;
 The horse, as wanton and almost as fleet,
 That skims the spacious meadow at full speed,
 Then stops and snorts, and throwing high his heels
 Starts to the voluntary race again;
 The very kine that gambol at high noon,
 The total herd receiving first from one
 That leads the dance a summons to be gay,
 Though wild their strange vagaries, and uncouth

Their efforts, yet resolved with one consent
 To give such act and utterance as they may.
 To ecstasy too big to be suppressed;—
 These, and a thousand images of bliss,
 With which kind nature graces every scene
 Where cruel man defeats not her design,
 Impart to the benevolent, who wish
 All that are capable of pleasure pleased,
 A far superior happiness to theirs,
 The comfort of a reasonable joy.

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Man scarce had risen, obedient to His call
 Who formed him from the dust, his future grave,
 When he was crowned as never king was since.
 God set the diadem upon his head,
 And angel choirs attended. Wondering stood
 The new-made monarch, while before him passed,
 All happy, and all perfect in their kind,
 The creatures, summoned from their various haunts
 To see their sovereign, and confess his sway.
 Vast was his empire, absolute his power,
 Or bounded only by a law whose force
 'Twas his sublimest privilege to feel
 And own, the law of universal love.
 He ruled with meekness, they obeyed with joy;
 No cruel purpose lurked within his heart,
 And no distrust of his intent in theirs.
 So Eden was a scene of harmless sport,
 Where kindness on his part who ruled the whole
 Begat a tranquil confidence in all,
 And fear as yet was not, nor cause for fear.
 But sin marred all; and the revolt of man,
 That source of evils not exhausted yet,
 Was punished with revolt of his from him.
 Garden of God, how terrible the change
 Thy groves and lawns then witnessed! Every heart,
 Each animal of every name, conceived
 A jealousy and an instinctive fear,
 And, conscious of some danger, either fled
 Precipitate the loathed abode of man,
 Or growled defiance in such angry sort
 As taught him too to tremble in his turn.
 Thus harmony and family accord
 Were driven from Paradise; and in that hour
 The seeds of cruelty, that since have swelled
 To such gigantic and enormous growth,
 Were sown in human nature's fruitful soil.
 Hence date the persecution and the pain

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That man inflicts on all inferior kinds,
Regardless of their plaints. To make him sport,
To gratify the frenzy of his wrath,
Or his base gluttony, are causes good
And just in his account why bird and beast
Should suffer torture, and the streams be dyed 390
With blood of their inhabitants impaled.
Earth groans beneath the burden of a war
Waged with defenceless innocence, while he,
Not satisfied to prey on all around,
Adds tenfold bitterness to death by pangs
Needless, and first torments ere he devours.
Now happiest they that occupy the scenes
The most remote from his abhorred resort
Whom once, as delegate of God on earth,
They feared, and as his perfect image loved. 400
The wilderness is theirs, with all its caves,
Its hollow glens, its thickets, and its plains
Unvisited by man. There they are free,
And howl and roar as likes them, uncontrolled,
Nor ask his leave to slumber or to play.
Woe to the tyrant, if he dare intrude
Within the confines of their wild domain :
The lion tells him, " I am monarch here !"
And if he spare him, spares him on the terms
Of royal mercy, and through generous scorn 410
To rend a victim trembling at his foot.
In measure as by force of instinct drawn,
Or by necessity constrained, they live
Dependent upon man, those in his fields,
These at his crib, and some beneath his roof.
They prove too often at how dear a rate
He sells protection. Witness, at his foot,
The spaniel dying for some venial fault,
Under dissection of the knotted scourge ;
Witness, the patient ox, with stripes and yells 420
Driven to the slaughter, goaded, as he runs,
To madness, while the savage at his heels
Laughs at the frantic sufferer's fury spent
Upon the guiltless passenger o'erthrown.
He too is witness, noblest of the train
That wait on man, the flight-performing horse :
With unsuspecting readiness he takes
His murderer on his back, and pushed all day,
With bleeding sides and flanks that heave for life,
To the far-distant goal, arrives and dies. 430
So little mercy shows who needs so much !

Does law, so jealous in the cause of man,
 Denounce no doom on the delinquent? None.
 He lives, and o'er his brimming beaker boasts
 (As if barbarity were high desert)
 The inglorious feat, and, clamorous in praise
 Of the poor brute, seems wisely to suppose
 The honours of his matchless horse his own.
 But many a crime deemed innocent on earth
 Is registered in heaven; and these, no doubt, 440
 Have each their record, with a curse annexed.
 Man may dismiss compassion from his heart,
 But God will never. When he charged the Jew
 To assist his foe's down-fallen beast to rise;
 And when the bush-exploring boy that seized
 The young to let the parent bird go free;
 Proved he not plainly that his meaner works
 Are yet his care, and have an interest all,
 All, in the universal Father's love?
 On Noah, and in him on all mankind, 450
 The charter was conferred, by which we hold
 The flesh of animals in fee, and claim
 O'er all we feed on power of life and death.
 But read the instrument, and mark it well:
 The oppression of a tyrannous control
 Can find no warrant there. Feed then, and yield
 Thanks for thy food. Carnivorous through sin,
 Feed on the slain, but spare the living, brute.
 The Governor of all, himself to all
 So bountiful, in whose attentive ear 460
 The unfledged raven and the lion's whelp
 Plead not in vain for pity on the pangs
 Of hunger unassuaged, has interposed,
 Not seldom, his avenging arm, to smite
 The injurious trampler upon nature's law,
 That claims forbearance even for a brute.
 He hates the hardness of a Balaam's heart;
 And, prophet as he was, he might not strike
 The blameless animal, without rebuke,
 On which he rode. Her opportune offence 470
 Saved him, or the unrelenting seer had died.
 He sees that human equity is slack
 To interfere, though in so just a cause,
 And makes the task his own: inspiring dumb
 And helpless victims with a sense so keen
 Of injury, with such knowledge of their strength
 And such sagacity to take revenge,
 That oft the beast has seemed to judge the man.

An ancient, not a legendary tale,
By one of sound intelligence rehearsed, 480
(If such who plead for Providence may seem
In modern eyes,) shall make the doctrine clear.

Where England, stretched towards the setting sun,
Narrow and long, o'erlooks the western wave,
Dwelt young Misagathus; a scorner he
Of God and goodness, atheist in ostent,
Vicious in act, in temper savage-fierce.
He journeyed; and his chance was as he went
To join a traveller of far different note,
Evander, famed for piety, for years 490
Deserving honour, but for wisdom more.

Fame had not left the venerable man
A stranger to the manners of the youth,
Whose face too was familiar to his view.
Their way was on the margin of the land,
O'er the green summit of the rocks whose base
Beats back the roaring surge, scarce heard so high.
The charity that warmed his heart was moved
At sight of the man-monster. With a smile
Gentle, and affable, and full of grace, 500

As fearful of offending whom he wished
Much to persuade, he plied his ear with truths
Not harshly thundered forth, or rudely pressed,
But, like his purpose, gracious, kind, and sweet.
"And dost thou dream," the impenetrable man
Exclaimed, "that me the lullabies of age,
And fantasies of dotards such as thou,
Can cheat, or move a moment's fear in me?
Mark not the proof I give thee, that the brave
Need no such aids as superstition lends, 510
To steel their hearts against the dread of death."

He spoke, and to the precipice at hand
Pushed with a madman's fury. Fancy shrinks,
And the blood thrills and curdles at the thought
Of such a gulf as he designed his grave.
But though the felon on his back could dare
The dreadful leap, more rational his steed
Declined the death, and wheeling swiftly round,
Or e'er his hoof had pressed the crumbling verge,
Baffled his rider, saved against his will. 520

The frenzy of the brain may be redressed
By medicine well applied, but without grace
The heart's insanity admits no cure.
Enraged the more by what might have reformed
His horrible intent, again he sought

Destruction, with a zeal to be destroyed,
 With sounding whip, and rowels died in blood.
 But still in vain. The Providence that meant
 A longer date to the far nobler beast
 Spared yet again the ignobler for his sake. 530
 And now, his prowess proved, and his sincere
 Incurable obduracy evinced,
 His rage grew cool; and, pleased perhaps to have earned
 So cheaply the renown of that attempt,
 With looks of some complacency he resumed
 His road, deriding much the blank amaze
 Of good Evander, still where he was left
 Fixed motionless, and petrified with dread.
 So on they fared; discourse on other themes
 Ensuing, seemed to obliterate the past, 540
 And tamer far for so much fury shown,
 (As is the course of rash and fiery men,)
 The rude companion smiled, as if transformed.
 But 'twas a transient calm. A storm was near,
 An unsuspected storm. His hour was come.
 The impious challenger of power divine
 Was now to learn that Heaven, though slow to wrath,
 Is never with impunity defied.
 His horse, as he had caught his master's mood,
 Snorting, and starting into sudden rage, 550
 Unbidden, and not now to be controlled,
 Rushed to the cliff, and having reached it, stood.
 At once the shock unseated him: he flew
 Sheer o'er the craggy barrier, and immersed
 Deep in the flood, found, when he sought it not,
 The death he had deserved, and died alone.
 So God wrought double justice; made the fool
 The victim of his own tremendous choice,
 And taught a brute the way to safe revenge.
 I would not enter on my list of friends 560
 (Though graced with polished manners and fine sense,
 Yet wanting sensibility) the man
 Who needlessly sets foot upon a worm.
 An inadvertent step may crush the snail
 That crawls at evening in the public path;
 But he that has humanity, forewarned,
 Will tread aside, and let the reptile live.
 The creeping vermin, loathsome to the sight,
 And charged perhaps with venom, that intrudes,
 A visitor unwelcome, into scenes 570
 Sacred to neatness and repose, the alcove,
 The chamber, or refectory, may die:

A necessary act incurs no blame.
Not so when, held within their proper bounds
And guiltless of offence, they range the air,
Or take their pastime in the spacious field.
There they are privileged ; and he that hunts
Or harms them there is guilty of a wrong,
Disturbs the economy of Nature's realm,
Who, when she formed, designed them an abode. 580
The sum is this : if man's convenience, health,
Or safety interfere, his rights and claims
Are paramount, and must extinguish theirs.
Else they are all—the meanest things that are—
As free to live, and to enjoy that life,
As God was free to form them at the first,
Who in his sovereign wisdom made them all.
Ye therefore who love mercy, teach your sons
To love it too. The spring-time of our years
Is soon dishonoured and defiled in most 590
By budding ills that ask a prudent hand
To check them. But, alas ! none sooner shoots,
If unrestrained, into luxuriant growth,
Than cruelty, most devilish of them all.
Mercy to him that shows it is the rule
And righteous limitation of its act,
By which Heaven moves in pardoning guilty man ;
And he that shows none, being ripe in years
And conscious of the outrage he commits,
Shall seek it and not find it in his turn. 600

Distinguished much by reason, and still more
By our capacity of grace divine,
From creatures that exist but for our sake,
Which, having served us, perish, we are held
Accountable, and God, some future day,
Will reckon with us roundly for the abuse
Of what he deems no mean or trivial trust.
Superior as we are, they yet depend
Not more on human help than we on theirs.
Their strength, or speed, or vigilance, were given 610
In aid of our defects. In some are found
Such teachable and apprehensive parts,
That man's attainments in his own concerns,
Matched with the expertness of the brutes in theirs,
Are oft-times vanquished and thrown far behind.
Some show that nice sagacity of smell,
And read with such discernment, in the port
And figure of the man, his secret aim,
That oft we owe our safety to a skill

We could not teach, and must despair to learn. 620
 But learn we might, if not too proud to stoop
 To quadruped instructors, many a good
 And useful quality, and virtue too,
 Rarely exemplified among ourselves :
 Attachment never to be weaned or changed
 By any change of fortune, proof alike
 Against unkindness, absence, and neglect ;
 Fidelity that neither bribe nor threat
 Can move or warp ; and gratitude for small
 And trivial favours, lasting as the life, 630
 And glistening even in the dying eye.

Man praises man. Desert in arts or arms
 Wins public honour ; and ten thousand sit
 Patiently present at a sacred song,
 Commemoration-mad ; content to hear
 (O wonderful effect of music's power !)
 Messiah's eulogy for Handel's sake.
 But less, methinks, than sacrilege might serve—
 (For was it less ? what heathen would have dared
 To strip Jove's statue of his oaken wreath, 640
 And hang it up in honour of a man ?)
 Much less might serve, when all that we design
 Is but to gratify an itching ear,
 And give the day to a musician's praise.
 Remember Handel ? Who that was not born
 Deaf as the dead to harmony, forgets,
 Or can, the more than Homer of his age ?
 Yes—we remember him ; and while we praise
 A talent so divine, remember too
 That His most holy book from whom it came 650
 Was never meant, was never used before,
 To buckram out the memory of a man.
 But hush !—the Muse perhaps is too severe,
 And, with a gravity beyond the size
 And measure of the offence, rebukes a deed
 Less impious than absurd, and owing more
 To want of judgment than to wrong design.
 So in the chapel of old Ely House,
 When wandering Charles, who meant to be the Third,
 Had fled from William, and the news was fresh, 660
 The simple clerk, but loyal, did announce,
 And eke did rear right merrily, two staves,
 Sung to the praise and glory of King George.

Man praises man ; and Garrick's memory next,
 When time hath somewhat mellowed it, and made
 The idol of our worship while he lived

The god of our idolatry once more,
Shall have its altar ; and the world shall go
In pilgrimage to bow before his shrine.
The theatre too small shall suffocate 670
Its squeezed contents, and more than it admits
Shall sigh at their exclusion, and return
Ungratified. For there some noble lord
Shall stuff his shoulders with King Richard's bunch,
Or wrap himself in Hamlet's inky cloak,
And strut, and storm, and straddle, stamp and stare,
To show the world how Garrick did not act.
For Garrick was a worshipper himself ;
He drew the liturgy, and framed the rites
And solemn ceremonial of the day, 680
And called the world to worship on the banks
Of Avon, famed in song. Ah, pleasant proof
That piety has still in human hearts
Some place, a spark or two not yet extinct !
The mulberry-tree was hung with blooming wreaths ;
The mulberry-tree stood centre of the dance ;
The mulberry-tree was hymned with dulcet airs ;
And from his touchwood trunk the mulberry-tree
Supplied such relics as devotion holds
Still sacred, and preserves with pious care. 690
So 'twas a hallowed time : decorum reigned,
And mirth without offence. No few returned,
Doubtless, much edified, and all refreshed.
Man praises man. The rabble all alive
From tippling benches, cellars, stalls, and styes,
Swarm in the streets. The statesman of the day,
A pompous and slow-moving pageant, comes.
Some shout him, and some hang upon his car,
To gaze in his eyes, and bless him. Maidens wave
Their kerchiefs, and old women weep for joy ; 700
While others, not so satisfied, unhorse
The gilded equipage, and turning loose
His steeds, usurp a place they well deserve.
Why ? what has charmed them ? Hath he saved the State ?
No. Doth he purpose its salvation ? No.
Enchanting novelty, that moon at full,
That finds out every crevice of the head
That is not sound and perfect, hath in theirs
Wrought this disturbance. But the wane is near,
And his own cattle must suffice him soon. 710
Thus idly do we waste the breath of praise,
And dedicate a tribute, in its use
And just direction sacred, to a thing

Doomed to the dust, or lodged already there.
 Encomium in old time was poet's work ;
 But poets having lavishly long since
 Exhausted all materials of the art,
 The task now falls into the public hand ;
 And I, contented with an humble theme,
 Have poured my stream of panegyric down
 The vale of nature, where it creeps and winds
 Among her lovely works with a secure
 And unambitious course, reflecting clear,
 If not the virtues, yet the worth, of brutes.
 And I am recompensed, and deem the toils
 Of poetry not lost, if verse of mine
 May stand between an animal and woe,
 And teach one tyrant pity for his drudge.

720

The groans of nature in this nether world,
 Which Heaven has heard for ages, have an end.
 Foretold by prophets, and by poets sung
 Whose fire was kindled at the prophet's lamp,
 The time of rest, the promised Sabbath, comes.
 Six thousand years of sorrow have well nigh
 Fulfilled their tardy and disastrous course
 Over a sinful world ; and what remains
 Of this tempestuous state of human things
 Is merely as the working of a sea
 Before a calm, that rocks itself to rest :
 For He, whose car the winds are, and the clouds
 The dust that waits upon his sultry march
 When sin hath moved him and his wrath is hot,
 Shall visit earth in mercy ; shall descend
 Propitious in his chariot paved with love ;
 And what his storms have blasted and defaced
 For man's revolt shall with a smile repair.

730

740

Sweet is the harp of prophecy ; too sweet
 Not to be wronged by a mere mortal touch ;
 Nor can the wonders it records be sung
 To meaner music, and not suffer loss.
 But when a poet, or when one like me,
 Happy to rove among poetic flowers,
 Though poor in skill to rear them, lights at last
 On some fair theme, some theme divinely fair,
 Such is the impulse and the spur he feels
 To give it praise proportioned to its worth,
 That not to attempt it, arduous as he deems
 The labour, were a task more arduous still.

750

O scenes surpassing fable, and yet true,
 Scenes of accomplished bliss ! which who can see,

760

Though but in distant prospect, and not feel
 His soul refreshed with foretaste of the joy ?
 Rivers of gladness water all the earth,
 And clothe all climes with beauty. The reproach
 Of barrenness is past. The fruitful field
 Laughs with abundance : and the land once lean,
 Or fertile only in its own disgrace,
 Exults to see its thistly curse repealed.
 The various seasons woven into one,
 And that one season an eternal spring, 770
 The garden fears no blight, and needs no fence,
 For there is none to covet, all are full.
 The lion, and the libbard, and the bear
 Graze with the fearless flocks ; all bask at noon
 Together, or all gambol in the shade
 Of the same grove, and drink one common stream.
 Antipathies are none. No foe to man
 Lurks in the serpent now : the mother sees,
 And smiles to see, her infant's playful hand
 Stretched forth to dally with the crested worm, 780
 To stroke his azure neck, or to receive
 The lambent homage of his arrowy tongue.
 All creatures worship man, and all mankind
 One Lord, one Father. Error has no place :
 That creeping pestilence is driven away :
 The breath of heaven has chased it. In the heart
 No passion touches a discordant string,
 But all is harmony and love. Disease
 Is not : the pure and uncontaminate blood
 Holds its due course, nor fears the frost of age. 790
 One song employs all nations, and all cry,
 " Worthy the Lamb, for He was slain for us !"
 The dwellers in the vales and on the rocks
 Shout to each other, and the mountain-tops
 From distant mountains catch the flying joy,
 Till, nation after nation taught the strain,
 Each rolls the rapturous Hosanna round.
 Behold the measure of the promise filled ;
 See Salem built, the labour of a God !
 Bright as a sun the sacred city shines ; 800
 All kingdoms and all princes of the earth
 Flock to that light ; the glory of all lands
 Flows into her ; unbounded is her joy
 And endless her increase. Thy rams are there,
 Nebaioth,* and the flocks of Kedar there ;

* Nebaioth and Kedar, the sons of Ishmael, and progenitors of the Arabs, in the prophetic scripture here alluded to, may be reasonably considered as representatives of the Gentiles at large.

The looms of Ormus, and the mines of Ind,
 And Saba's spicy groves, pay tribute there.
 Praise is in all her gates ; upon her walls,
 And in her streets, and in her spacious courts,
 Is heard salvation. Eastern Java there 810
 Kneels with the native of the farthest West,
 And Æthiopia spreads abroad the hand,
 And worships. Her report has travelled forth
 Into all lands. From every clime they come
 To see thy beauty and to share thy joy,
 O Sion ! an assembly such as earth
 Saw never ; such as heaven stoops down to see.

Thus heavenward all things tend. For all were once
 Perfect, and all must be at length restored.
 So God has greatly purposed ; who would else 820
 In his dishonoured works himself endure
 Dishonour, and be wronged without redress.
 Haste then, and wheel away a shattered world,
 Ye slow-revolving seasons ! We would see
 (A sight to which our eyes are strangers yet)
 A world that does not dread and hate his laws,
 And suffer for its crime : would learn how fair
 The creature is that God pronounces good,
 How pleasant in itself what pleases him.
 Here every drop of honey hides a sting ; 830
 Worms wind themselves into our sweetest flowers,
 And even the joy, that haply some poor heart
 Derives from heaven, pure as the fountain is,
 Is sullied in the stream ; taking a taint
 From touch of human lips, at best impure.
 Oh for a world in principle as chaste
 As this is gross and selfish ! over which
 Custom and prejudice shall bear no sway,
 That govern all things here, should ring aside
 The meek and modest truth, and forcing her 840
 To seek a refuge from the tongue of strife
 In nooks obscure, far from the ways of men ;
 Where violence shall never lift the sword,
 Nor cunning justify the proud man's wrong,
 Leaving the poor no remedy but tears ;
 Where he that fills an office shall esteem
 The occasion it presents of doing good
 More than the perquisite ; where law shall speak
 Seldom, and never but as wisdom prompts,
 And equity ; not jealous more to guard 850
 A worthless form, than to decide aright ;
 Where fashion shall not sanctify abuse,

Nor smooth good-breeding (supplemental grace)
With lean performance ape the work of love.

Come then, and added to thy many crowns
Receive yet one, the crown of all the earth,
Thou who alone art worthy ! it was Thine
By ancient covenant, ere nature's birth,
And Thou hast made it thine by purchase since,
And overpaid its value with thy blood. 860

Thy saints proclaim thee king ; and in their hearts
Thy title is engraven with a pen
Dipt in the fountain of eternal love.

Thy saints proclaim thee king ; and thy delay
Gives courage to their foes, who, could they see
The dawn of thy last advent, long-desired,
Would creep into the bowels of the hills,
And flee for safety to the falling rocks.
The very spirit of the world is tired
Of its own taunting question, asked so long, 870

"Where is the promise of your Lord's approach ?"

The infidel has shot his bolts away,
Till, his exhausted quiver yielding none,
He gleans the blunted shafts that have recoiled,
And aims them at the shield of truth again.

The veil is rent, rent too by priestly hands,
That hides divinity from mortal eyes ;
And all the mysteries to faith proposed,
Insulted and traduced, are cast aside,
As useless, to the moles and to the bats. 880

They now are deemed the faithful and are praised,
Who, constant only in rejecting thee,
Deny thy Godhead with a martyr's zeal,
And quit their office for their error's sake.
Blind and in love with darkness ! yet ev'n these
Worthy, compared with sycophants who knee
Thy name adoring, and then preach thee man !
So fares thy church. But how thy church may fare,
The world takes little thought ; who will may preach,
And what they will. All pastors are alike 890

To wandering sheep, resolved to follow none.
Two gods divide them all, pleasure and gain ;
For these they live, they sacrifice to these,
And in their service wage perpetual war
With conscience and with thee. Lust in their hearts,
And mischief in their hands, they roam the earth
To prey upon each other : stubborn, fierce,
High-minded, foaming out their own disgrace.
Thy prophets speak of such ; and, noting down

The features of the last degenerate times, 900
Exhibit every lineament of these.

Come then, and added to thy many crowns,
Receive yet one, as radiant as the rest,
Due to thy last and most effectual work,
Thy word fulfilled, the conquest of a world.

He is the happy man, whose life even now
Shows somewhat of that happier life to come :
Who, doomed to an obscure but tranquil state,
Is pleased with it, and, were he free to choose,
Would make his fate his choice ; whom peace, the fruit
Of virtue, and whom virtue, fruit of faith, 911

Prepare for happiness ; bespeak him one
Content indeed to sojourn while he must
Below the skies, but having there his home.
The world o'erlooks him in her busy search
Of objects more illustrious in her view ;
And occupied as earnestly as she,
Though more sublimely, he o'erlooks the world.
She scorns his pleasures, for she knows them not ;
He seeks not hers, for he has proved them vain. 920

He cannot skim the ground like summer birds
Pursuing gilded flies, and such he deems
Her honours, her emoluments, her joys.
Therefore in contemplation is his bliss,
Whose power is such, that whom she lifts from earth
She makes familiar with a heaven unseen,
And shows him glories yet to be revealed.
Not slothful he, though seeming unemployed,
And censured oft as useless. Stillest streams
Oft water fairest meadows, and the bird 930
That flutters least is longest on the wing.

Ask him, indeed, what trophies he has raised,
Or what achievements of immortal fame
He purposes, and he shall answer—None. —
His warfare is within. There unfatigued
His fervent spirit labours. There he fights,
And there obtains fresh triumphs o'er himself,
And never-withering wreaths, compared with which
The laurels that a Cæsar reaps are weeds.

Perhaps the self-approving haughty world, 940
That as she sweeps him with her whistling silks
Scarce deigns to notice him, or, if she see,
Deems him a cipher in the works of God,
Receives advantage from his noiseless hours,
Of which she little dreams. Perhaps she owes
Her sunshine and her rain, her blooming spring

And plenteous harvest, to the prayer he makes,
 When, Isaac-like, the solitary saint
 Walks forth to meditate at eventide,
 And think on her, who thinks not for herself.

950

Forgive him then, thou bustler in concerns
 Of little worth and idler in the best,
 If, author of no mischief and some good,
 He seek his proper happiness by means
 That may advance, but cannot hinder, thine.
 Nor though he tread the secret path of life,
 Engage no notice, and enjoy much ease,
 Account him an encumbrance on the state,
 Receiving benefits, and rendering none.

His sphere though humble, if that humble sphere 960

Shine with his fair example, and though small
 His influence, if that influence all be spent
 In soothing sorrow and in quenching strife,
 In aiding helpless indigence, in works
 From which at least a grateful few derive
 Some taste of comfort in a world of woe,
 Then let the supercilious great confess

✓ He serves his country, recompenses well

The state beneath the shadow of whose vine
 He sits secure, and in the scale of life

970

✓ Holds no ignoble, though a slighted, place.

The man whose virtues are more felt than seen —

Must drop indeed the hope of public praise ;

But he may boast what few that win it can,

That if his country stand not by his skill,

At least his follies have not wrought her fall.

Polite refinement offers him in vain

Her golden tube, through which a sensual world

Draws gross impurity and likes it well,

The neat conveyance hiding all the offence.

980

Not that he peevishly rejects a mode

Because that world adopts it. If it bear

The stamp and clear impression of good sense,

And be not costly more than of true worth,

He puts it on, and for decorum sake

Can wear it even as gracefully as she.

She judges of refinement by the eye,

He by the test of conscience, and a heart

Not soon deceived ; aware that what is base

No polish can make sterling, and that vice,

990

Though well perfumed and elegantly dressed,

Like an unburied carcase tricked with flowers,

Is but a garnished nuisance, fitter far

For cleanly riddance than for fair attire.
 So life glides smoothly and by stealth away,
 More golden than that age of fabled gold
 Renowned in ancient song ; not vexed with care
 Or stained with guilt, beneficent, approved
 Of God and man, and peaceful in its end.
 So glide my life away ! and so at last, 1000
 My share of duties decently fulfilled,
 May some disease, not tardy to perform
 Its destined office, yet with gentle stroke,
 Dismiss me weary to a safe retreat,
 Beneath the turf that I have often trod.
 It shall not grieve me, then, that once, when called
 To dress a Sofa with the flowers of verse,
 I played awhile, obedient to the fair,
 With that light task ; but soon, to please her more,
 Whom flowers alone I knew would little please, 1010
 Let fall the unfinished wreath, and roved for fruit ;
 Roved far, and gathered much : some harsh, 'tis true,
 Picked from the thorns and briars of reproof,
 But wholesome, well digested ; grateful some
 To palates that can taste immortal truth,
 Insipid else, and sure to be despised.
 But all is in His hand whose praise I seek.
 In vain the poet sings, and the world hears,
 If He regard not, though divine the theme.
 'Tis not in artful measures, in the chime 1020
 And idle tinkling of a minstrel's lyre,
 To charm His ear whose eye is on the heart ;
 Whose frown can disappoint the proudest strain,
 Whose approbation—prosper even mine.

AN EPISTLE TO JOSEPH HILL, Esq.

DEAR JOSEPH,—Five and twenty years ago—
 Alas, how time escapes!—'tis even so—
 With frequent intercourse, and always sweet,
 And always friendly, we were wont to cheat
 A tedious hour, and now we never meet!
 As some grave gentleman in Terence says
 ('Twas therefore much the same in ancient days),
 Good lack, we know not what to-morrow brings—
 Strange fluctuation of all human things!
 True. Changes will befall, and friends may part, 10
 But distance only cannot change the heart:
 And were I called to prove the assertion true,
 One proof should serve—a reference to you.

Whence comes it, then, that in the wane of life,
 Though nothing have occurred to kindle strife,
 We find the friends we fancied we had won,
 Though numerous once, reduced to few or none?
 Can gold grow worthless, that has stood the touch?
 No; gold they seemed, but they were never such.

Horatio's servant once, with bow and cringe, 20
 Swinging the parlour door upon its hinge,
 Dreading a negative, and overawed
 Lest he should trespass, begged to go abroad.
 "Go, fellow!—whither?"—turning short about—
 "Nay. Stay at home—you're always going out."—
 "'Tis but a step, sir; just at the street's end."—
 "For what?"—"An please you, sir, to see a friend."—
 "A friend!" Horatio cried, and seemed to start—
 "Yea marry shalt thou, and with all my heart.
 And fetch my cloak; for, though the night be raw, 30
 I'll see him too—the first I ever saw."

I knew the man, and knew his nature mild,
 And was his plaything often when a child;
 But somewhat at that moment pinched him close,
 Else he was seldom bitter or morose.
 Perhaps, his confidence just then betrayed,
 His grief might prompt him with the speech he made;
 Perhaps 'twas mere good humour gave it birth,
 The harmless play of pleasantry and mirth.

Howe'er it was, his language, in my mind,
Bespoke at least a man that knew mankind.

40

But not to moralize too much, and strain
To prove an evil of which all complain,
(I hate long arguments verbosely spun,)
One story more, dear Hill, and I have done.
Once on a time, an emperor, a wise man,
No matter where, in China or Japan,
Decreed, that whosoever should offend
Against the well-known duties of a friend,
Convicted once, should ever after wear
But half a coat, and show his bosom bare :
The punishment importing this, no doubt,
That all was naught within, and all found out.

50

O happy Britain ! we have not to fear
Such hard and arbitrary measure here ;
Else, could a law like that which I relate
Once have the sanction of our triple state,
Some few that I have known in days of old
Would run most dreadful risk of catching cold ;
While you, my friend, whatever wind should blow,
Might traverse England safely to and fro,
An honest man, close buttoned to the chin,
Broadcloth without, and a warm heart within.

60

TIROCINIUM;
OR,
A REVIEW OF SCHOOLS.

Κεφάλαιον δὴ παιδείας ὀρθῇ τροφῇ.—PLATO.
'Αρχὴ πολιτείας ἀπάσης νέων τροφά.—DIOG. LAERT.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM CAWTHORNE UNWIN,

Rector of Stock, in Essex,

THE TUTOR OF HIS TWO SONS,

The following POEM, recommending Private Tuition in preference to an Education at School,

IS INSCRIBED, BY HIS AFFECTIONATE FRIEND,

WILLIAM COWPER.

OLNEY, Nov. 6, 1784.

TIROCINIUM ;

OR,

A REVIEW OF SCHOOLS

IT is not from his form, in which we trace
Strength joined with beauty, dignity with grace,
That man, the master of this globe, derives
His right of empire over all that lives.
That form indeed, the associate of a mind
Vast in its powers, ethereal in its kind,—
That form, the labour of Almighty skill,
Framed for the service of a free-born will,
Asserts precedence, and bespeaks control,
But borrows all its grandeur from the soul. 10
Hers is the state, the splendour, and the throne,
An intellectual kingdom all her own.
For her the memory fills her ample page
With truths poured down from every distant age ;
For her amasses an unbounded store,
The wisdom of great nations now no more ;
Though laden, not encumbered with her spoil ;
Laborious, yet unconscious of her toil ;
When copiously supplied, then most enlarged ;
Still to be fed, and not to be surcharged. 20
For her the fancy, roving unconfined,
The present muse of every pensive mind,
Works magic wonders, adds a brighter hue
To nature's scenes than nature ever knew.
At her command winds rise and waters roar,
Again she lays them slumbering on the shore ;
With flower and fruit the wilderness supplies,
Or bids the rocks in ruder pomp arise.
For her the judgment, umpire in the strife
That grace and nature have to wage through life, 30
Quick-sighted arbiter of good and ill,
Appointed sage preceptor to the will,
Condemns, approves, and with a faithful voice

Guides the decision of a doubtful choice

Why did the fiat of a God give birth
 To yon fair sun, and his attendant earth?
 And, when descending he resigns the skies,
 Why takes the gentler moon her turn to rise,
 Whom ocean feels through all his countless waves,
 And owns her power on every shore he laves?
 Why do the seasons still enrich the year,
 Fruitful and young as in their first career?
 Spring hangs her infant blossoms on the trees,
 Rocked in the cradle of the western breeze;
 Summer in haste the thriving charge receives
 Beneath the shade of her expanded leaves,
 Till autumn's fiercer heats and plenteous dews
 Dye them at last in all their glowing hues.—
 'Twere wild profusion all, and bootless waste,
 Power misemployed, munificence misplaced,
 Had not its Author dignified the plan,
 And crowned it with the majesty of man.
 Thus formed, thus placed, intelligent, and taught,
 Look where he will, the wonders God has wrought,
 The wildest scorner of his Maker's laws
 Finds in a sober moment time to pause,
 To press the important question on his heart,
 "Why formed at all, and wherefore as thou art?"
 If man be what he seems, this hour a slave,
 The next mere dust and ashes in the grave,
 Endued with reason only to descry
 His crimes and follies with an aching eye;
 With passions, just that he may prove with pain
 The force he spends against their fury vain;
 And if, soon after having burned by turns
 With every lust with which frail nature burns,
 His being end where death dissolves the bond,
 The tomb take all, and all be blank beyond;
 Then he, of all that nature has brought forth,
 Stands self-impeached the creature of least worth,
 And, useless while he lives, and when he dies,
 Brings into doubt the wisdom of the skies.

Truths that the learn'd pursue with eager thought
 Are not important always as dear-bought,
 Proving at last, though told in pompous strains,
 A childish waste of philosophic pains;
 But truths on which depend our main concern,
 That 'tis our shame and misery not to learn,
 Shine by the side of every path we tread
 With such a lustre he that runs may read.

'Tis true that if to trifle life away
 Down to the sunset of their latest day,
 Then perish on futurity's wide shore
 Like fleeting exhalations found no more,
 Were all that Heaven required of humankind,
 And all the plan their destiny designed,
 What none could reverence all might justly blame,
 And man would breathe but for his Maker's shame.
 But reason heard and nature well perused
 At once the dreaming mind is disabused. 90
 If all we find possessing earth, sea, air,
 Reflect His attributes who placed them there,
 Fulfil the purpose, and appear designed
 Proofs of the wisdom of the all-seeing mind,
 'Tis plain the creature whom he chose to invest
 With kingship and dominion o'er the rest,
 Received his nobler nature, and was made
 Fit for the power in which he stands arrayed,
 That first or last, hereafter if not here,
 He too might make his Author's wisdom clear, 100
 Praise him on earth, or, obstinately dumb,
 Suffer his justice in a world to come.
 This once believed, 'twere logic misapplied
 To prove a consequence by none denied,
 That we are bound to cast the minds of youth
 Betimes into the mould of heavenly truth,
 That taught of God they may indeed be wise,
 Nor ignorantly wandering miss the skies.

In early days the conscience has in most
 A quickness which in later life is lost : 110
 Preserved from guilt by salutary fears,
 Or, guilty, soon relenting into tears.
 Too careless often, as our years proceed,
 What friends we sort with, or what books we read,
 Our parents yet exert a prudent care
 To feed our infant minds with proper fare ;
 And wisely store the nursery by degrees
 With wholesome learning, yet acquired with ease.
 Neatly secured from being soiled or torn
 Beneath a pane of thin translucent horn, 120
 A book (to please us at a tender age
 'Tis called a book, though but a single page)
 Presents the prayer the Saviour deigned to teach,
 Which children use, and parsons—when they preach.
 Lipping our syllables we scramble next
 Through moral narrative or sacred text ;
 And learn with wonder how this world began,

Who made, who marred, and who has ransomed man—
 Points which, unless the Scripture made them plain,
 The wisest heads might agitate in vain. 130
 O thou whom, borne on fancy's eager wing
 Back to the season of life's happy spring,
 I pleased remember, and, while memory yet
 Holds fast her office here, can ne'er forget;
 Ingenious dreamer, in whose well-told tale
 Sweet fiction and sweet truth alike prevail;
 Whose humorous vein, strong sense, and simple style
 May teach the gayest, make the gravest smile;
 Witty, and well employed, and, like thy Lord,
 Speaking in parables His slighted word; 140
 I name thee not lest so despised a name
 Should move a sneer at thy deserved fame,
 Yet, e'en in transitory life's late day
 That mingles all my brown with sober gray,
 Revere the man whose PILGRIM marks the road
 And guides the PROGRESS of the soul to God.
 'Twere well with most, if books that could engage
 Their childhood pleased them at a riper age;
 The man, approving what had charmed the boy,
 Would die at last in comfort, peace, and joy; 150
 And not with curses on his art who stole
 The gem of truth from his unguarded soul.
 The stamp of artless piety impressed
 By kind tuition on his yielding breast
 The youth now bearded, and yet pert and raw,
 Regards with scorn, though once received with awe,
 And, warped into the labyrinth of lies
 That babblers, called philosophers, devise,
 Blasphemes his creed, as founded on a plan
 Replete with dreams, unworthy of a man. 160
 Touch but his nature in its ailing part,
 Assert the native evil of his heart,
 His pride resents the charge, although the proof*
 Rise in his forehead, and seem rank enough:
 Point to the cure, describe a Saviour's cross
 As God's expedient to retrieve his loss,
 The young apostate sickens at the view,
 And hates it with the malice of a Jew.
 How weak the barrier of mere Nature proves,
 Opposed against the pleasures Nature loves! 170
 While self-betrayed, and wilfully undone,
 She longs to yield, no sooner wooed than won.
 Try now the merits of this blest exchange

* See 2 Chron. xxvi. 19.

Of modest truth for wit's eccentric range.
 Time was he closed as he began the day,
 With decent duty, not ashamed to pray ;
 The practice was a bond upon his heart,
 A pledge he gave for a consistent part ;
 Nor could he dare presumptuously displease
 A Power confessed so lately on his knees. 180
 But now farewell all legendary tales,
 The shadows fly, philosophy prevails ;
 Prayer to the winds, and caution to the waves ;
 Religion makes the free by nature slaves ;
 Priests have invented, and the world admired
 What knavish priests promulgate as inspired !
 Till Reason, now no longer overawed,
 Resumes her powers, and spurns the clumsy fraud,
 And, common-sense diffusing real day,
 The meteor of the Gospel dies away. 190
 Such rhapsodies our shrewd discerning youth
 Learn from expert inquirers after truth ;
 Whose only care, might truth presume to speak,
 Is not to find what they profess to seek.
 And thus, well-tutored only while we share
 A mother's lectures and a nurse's care ;
 And taught at schools much mythologic stuff,*
 But sound religion sparingly enough ;
 Our early notices of truth, disgraced,
 Soon lose their credit, and are all effaced. 200

Would you your son should be a sot or dunce,
 Lascivious, headstrong, or all these at once ;
 That in good time the stripling's finished taste
 For loose expense and fashionable waste
 Should prove your ruin, and his own at last ;
 Train him in public with a mob of boys,
 Childish in mischief only and in noise,
 Else of a mannish growth, and five in ten
 In infidelity and lewdness men.
 There shall he learn, ere sixteen winters old, 210
 That authors are most useful pawned or sold ;
 That pedantry is all that schools impart,
 But taverns teach the knowledge of the heart ;
 There waiter Dick, with bacchanalian lays,
 Shall win his heart, and have his drunken praise,

* The author begs leave to explain.—Sensible that, without such knowledge, neither the ancient poets nor historians can be tasted, or indeed understood, he does not mean to censure the pains that are taken to instruct a schoolboy in the religion of the heathen, but merely that neglect of Christian culture which leaves him shamefully ignorant of his own.

His counsellor and bosom friend shall prove,
 And some street-pacing harlot his first love.
 Schools, unless discipline were doubly strong,
 Detain their adolescent charge too long ;
 The management of tyros of eighteen 220
 Is difficult ; their punishment obscene.
 The stout tall captain, whose superior size
 The minor heroes view with envious eyes,
 Becomes their pattern, upon whom they fix
 Their whole attention, and ape all his tricks.
 His pride, that scorns to obey or to submit,
 With them is courage ; his effrontery wit ;
 His wild excursions, window-breaking feats,
 Robbery of gardens, quarrels in the streets,
 His hairbreadth 'scapes, and all his daring schemes, 230
 Transport them, and are made their favourite themes.
 In little bosoms such achievements strike
 A kindred spark : they burn to do the like.
 Thus half-accomplished ere he yet begin
 To show the peeping down upon his chin ;
 And, as maturity of years comes on,
 Made just the adept that you designed your son ;
 To ensure the perseverance of his course,
 And give your monstrous project all its force,
 Send him to college. If he there be tamed, 240
 Or in one article of vice reclaimed,
 Where no regard of ord'nances is shown
 Or looked for now, the fault must be his own.
 Some sneaking virtue lurks in him, no doubt,
 Where neither strumpets' charms, nor drinking bout,
 Nor gambling practices, can find it out.
 Such youths of spirit, and that spirit too,
 Ye nurseries of our boys, we owe to you :
 Though from ourselves the mischief more proceeds,
 For public schools 'tis public folly feeds. 250
 The slaves of custom and established mode,
 With packhorse constancy we keep the road,
 Crooked or straight, through quags or thorny dells,
 True to the jingling of our leaders' bells.
 To follow foolish precedents, and wink
 With both our eyes, is easier than to think ;
 And such an age as ours balks no expense,
 Except of caution, and of common-sense :
 Else, sure, notorious fact and proof so plain
 Would turn our steps into a wiser train. 260
 I blame not those who, with what care they can,
 O'erwatch the numerous and unruly clan :

Or, if I blame, 'tis only that they dare
 Promise a work of which they must despair.
 Have ye, ye sage intendants of the whole,
 A ubiquarian presence and control,
 Elisha's eye, that, when Gehazi strayed,
 Went with him and saw all the game he played?
 Yes—ye are conscious; and on all the shelves
 Your pupils strike upon have struck yourselves. 270

Or if, by nature sober, ye had then,
 Boys as ye were, the gravity of men;
 Ye knew at least, by constant proofs addressed
 To ears and eyes, the vices of the rest.
 But ye connive at what ye cannot cure,
 And evils not to be endured endure,
 Lest power exerted but without success
 Should make the little ye retain still less.

Ye once were justly famed for bringing forth
 Undoubted scholarship and genuine worth: 280
 And in the firmament of fame still shines
 A glory, bright as that of all the signs,
 Of poets raised by you, and statesmen, and divines.

Peace to them all! those brilliant times are fled,
 And no such lights are kindling in their stead.
 Our striplings shine indeed, but with such rays
 As set the midnight riot in a blaze;
 And seem, if judged by their expressive looks,
 Deeper in none than in their surgeons' books.

Say, Muse (for, education made the song, 290
 No muse can hesitate, or linger long),
 What causes move us, knowing as we must,
 That these *menageries* all fail their trust,
 To send our sons to scout and scamper there,
 While colts and puppies cost us so much care?

Be it a weakness, it deserves some praise,
 We love the play-place of our early days.
 The scene is touching; and the heart is stone
 That feels not at that sight, and feels at none.
 The wall on which we tried our graving skill, 300
 The very name we carved subsisting still;
 The bench on which we sat while deep employed,
 Though mangled, hacked, and hewed, not yet destroyed:
 The little ones, unbuttoned, glowing hot,
 Playing our games, and on the very spot;
 As happy as we once, to kneel and draw
 The chalky ring, and knuckle down at taw;
 To pitch the ball into the grounded hat,
 Or drive it devious with a dexterous pat;

The pleasing spectacle at once excites 310
 Such recollection of our own delights
 That, viewing it, we seem almost to obtain
 Our innocent sweet simple years again.
 This fond attachment to the well-known place
 Whence first we started into life's long race
 Maintains its hold with such unfailing sway,
 We feel it e'en in age and at our latest day.
 Hark ! how the sire of chits, whose future share
 Of classic food begins to be his care,
 With his own likeness placed on either knee, 320
 Indulges all a father's heartfelt glee ;
 And tells them, as he strokes their silver locks,
 That they must soon learn Latin, and to box :
 Then turning he regales his listening wife
 With all the adventures of his early life ;
 His skill in coachmanship, or driving chaise,
 In bilking tavern bills, and spouting plays ;
 What shifts he used detected in a scrape,
 How he was flogged, or had the luck to escape ;
 What sums he lost at play, and how he sold 330
 Watch, seals, and all—till all his pranks are told.
 Retracing thus his *frolics* ('tis a name
 That palliates deeds of folly and of shame),
 He gives the local bias all its sway ;
 Resolves that where he played his sons shall play,
 And destines their bright genius to be shown
 Just in the scene where he displayed his own.
 The meek and bashful boy will soon be taught
 To be as bold and forward as he ought ;
 The rude will scuffle through with ease enough, 340
 Great schools suit best the sturdy and the rough.
 Ah, happy designation, prudent choice,
 The event is sure ; expect it, and rejoice !
 Soon see your wish fulfilled in either child,
 The pert made perter, and the tame made wild.
 The great, indeed, by titles, riches, birth,
 Excused the incumbrance of more solid worth,
 Are best disposed of where with most success
 They may acquire that confident address,
 Those habits of profuse and lewd expense, 350
 That scorn of all delights but those of sense,
 Which, though in plain plebeians we condemn,
 With so much reason all expect from them.
 But families of less illustrious fame,
 Whose chief distinction is their spotless name,
 Whose heirs, their honours none, their income small,

Must shine by true desert or not at all,
 What dream they of, that with so little care
 They risk their hopes, their dearest treasure, there?
 They dream of little Charles or William graced 360
 With wig prolix, down flowing to his waist;
 They see the attentive crowds his talents draw,
 They hear him speak—the oracle of law.
 The father who designs his babe a priest,
 Dreams him episcopally such at least;
 And, while the playful jockey scours the room
 Briskly, astride upon the parlour broom,
 In fancy sees him more superbly ride
 In coach with purple lined, and mitres on its side.
 Events improbable and strange as these, 370
 Which only a parental eye foresees,
 A public school shall bring to pass with ease.
 But how? resides such virtue in that air,
 As must create an appetite for prayer?
 And will it breathe into him all the zeal,
 That candidates for such a prize should feel,
 To take the lead, and be the foremost still
 In all true worth and literary skill?

“Ah, blind to bright futurity, untaught
 “The knowledge of the world, and dull of thought! 380
 “Church-ladders are not always mounted best
 “By learned clerks and Latinists professed.
 “The exalted prize demands an upward look
 “Not to be found by poring on a book.
 “Small skill in Latin, and still less in Greek,
 “Is more than adequate to all I seek.
 “Let erudition grace him, or not grace,
 “I give the bauble but the second place;
 “His wealth, fame, honours, all that I intend,
 “Subsist and centre in one point—a friend. 390
 “A friend, whate’er he studies or neglects,
 “Shall give him consequence, heal all defects.
 “His intercourse with peers and sons of peers—
 “There dawns the splendour of his future years;
 “In that bright quarter his propitious skies
 “Shall blush betimes, and there his glory rise.
 “*Your Lordship, and Your Grace!* what school can teach
 “A rhetoric equal to those parts of speech?
 “What need of Homer’s verse, or Tully’s prose,
 “Sweet interjections! if he learn but those? 400
 “Let reverend churls his ignorance rebuke,
 “Who starve upon a dog’s-eared Pentateuch,
 “The parson knows enough who knows a duke.”

Egregious purpose ! worthily begun
 In barbarous prostitution of your son ;
 Pressed on his part by means that would disgrace
 A scrivener's clerk, or footman out of place,
 And ending, if at last its end be gained,
 In sacrilege, in God's own house profaned.
 It may succeed ; and, if his sins should call 410
 For more than common punishment, it shall ;
 The wretch shall rise, and be the thing on earth
 Least qualified in honour, learning, worth,
 To occupy a sacred, awful post,
 In which the best and worthiest tremble most.
 The *royal letters* are a thing of course,
 A king that would, might recommend his horse ;
 And Deans, no doubt, and Chapters, with one voice
 As bound in duty, would confirm the choice.
 Behold your Bishop ; well he plays his part, 420
 Christian in name, and infidel in heart,
 Ghostly in office, earthly in his plan,
 A slave at court, elsewhere a lady's man.
 Dumb as a senator, and as a priest
 A piece of mere church furniture at best ;
 To live estranged from God his total scope,
 And his end sure, without one glimpse of hope.
 But fair although and feasible it seem,
 Depend not much upon your golden dream ;
 For Providence, that seems concerned to exempt 430
 The hallowed bench from absolute contempt,
 In spite of all the wrigglers into place,
 Still keeps a seat or two for worth and grace ;
 And therefore 'tis that, though the sight be rare,
 We sometimes see a Lowth or Bagot there.
 Besides, school friendships are not always found,
 Though fair in promise, permanent and sound ;
 The most disinterested and virtuous minds,
 In early years connected, time unbinds ;
 New situations give a different cast 440
 Of habit, inclination, temper, taste ;
 And he that seemed our counterpart at first
 Soon shows the strong similitude reversed.
 Young heads are giddy, and young hearts are warm,
 And make mistakes for manhood to reform.
 Boys are at best but pretty buds unblown,
 Whose scent and hues are rather guessed than known ;
 Each dreams that each is just what he appears,
 But learns his error in maturer years,
 When disposition, like a sail unfurled, 450

Shows all its rents and patches to the world.
 If, therefore, e'en when honest in design,
 A boyish friendship may so soon decline,
 'Twere wiser sure to inspire a little heart
 With just abhorrence of so mean a part,
 Than set your son to work at a vile trade
 For wages so unlikely to be paid.

Our public hives of puerile resort
 That are of chief and most approved report
 To such base hopes, in many a sordid soul, 460
 Owe their repute in part, but not the whole.

A principle, whose proud pretensions pass
 Unquestioned, though the jewel be but glass,
 That with a world not often over-nice
 Ranks as a virtue, and is yet a vice ;
 Or rather a gross compound, justly tried,
 Of envy, hatred, jealousy, and pride—
 Contributes most perhaps to enhance their fame,
 And Emulation is its specious name.

Boys, once on fire with that contentious zeal, 470
 Feel all the rage that female rivals feel :

The prize of beauty in a woman's eyes
 Not brighter than in theirs the scholar's prize.

The spirit of that competition burns
 With all varieties of ill by turns ;
 Each vainly magnifies his own success,
 Resents his fellow's, wishes it were less,
 Exults in his miscarriage if he fail,
 Deems his reward too great if he prevail,
 And labours to surpass him day and night, 480
 Less for improvement than to tickle spite.

The spur is powerful, and I grant its force,
 It pricks the genius forward in its course,
 Allows short time for play, and none for sloth,
 And, felt alike by each, advances both,
 But judge, where so much evil intervenes,
 The end, though plausible, not worth the means.

Weigh, for a moment, classical desert
 Against a heart depraved and temper hurt ;
 Hurt too perhaps for life ; for early wrong, 490
 Done to the nobler part, affects it long ;
 And you are staunch indeed in learning's cause
 If you can crown a discipline that draws
 Such mischiefs after it with much applause.

Connexion formed for interest, and endeared
 By selfish views, thus censured and cashiered ;
 And emulation, as engendering hate,

Doomed to a no less ignominious fate :
 The props of such proud seminaries fall,
 The Jachin and the Boaz of them all. 500
 Great schools rejected then as those that swell
 Beyond a size that can be managed well,
 Shall royal institutions miss the bays,
 And small academies win all the praise ?
 Force not my drift beyond its just intent ;
 I praise a school as Pope a government ;
 So take my judgment in his language dressed,
 ' Whate'er is best administered is best.'
 Few boys are born with talents that excel,
 But are all capable of living well ; 510
 Then ask not, whether limited or large ?
 But, watch they strictly, or neglect the charge ?
 If anxious only that their boys may *learn*,
 While *morals* languish a despised concern,
 The great and small deserve one common blame,
 Different in size, but in effect the same.
 Much zeal in virtue's cause all teachers boast,
 Though motives of mere lucre sway the most :
 Therefore in towns and cities they abound,
 For there the game they seek is easiest found ; 520
 Though there, in spite of all that care can do,
 Traps to catch youth are most abundant too.
 If shrewd and of a well-constructed brain,
 Keen in pursuit, and vigorous to retain,
 Your son come forth a prodigy of skill ;
 As, wheresoever taught, so formed he will ;
 The pedagogue, with self-complacent air,
 Claims more than half the praise as his due share.
 But if, with all his genius, he betray,
 Not more intelligent than loose and gay, 530
 Such vicious habits as disgrace his name,
 Threaten his health, his fortune, and his fame ;
 Though want of due restraint alone have bred
 The symptoms that you see with so much dread ;
 Unenvied there, he may sustain alone
 The whole reproach, the fault was all his own.
 Oh 'tis a sight to be with joy perused
 By all whom sentiment has not abused ;
 New-fangled sentiment, the boasted grace
 Of those who never feel in the right place ; 540
 A sight surpassed by none that we can show,
 Though Vestris on one leg still shine below ;
 A father blest with an ingenuous son,
 Father, and friend, and tutor, all in one.

How!—turn again to tales long since forgot,
 Æsop, and Phædrus, and the rest?—Why not?
 He will not blush, that has a father's heart,
 To take in childish plays a childish part;
 But bends his sturdy back to any toy
 That youth takes pleasure in, to please his boy; 550
 Then why resign into a stranger's hand
 A task as much within your own command,
 That God and nature and your interest too,
 Seem with one voice to delegate to you?
 Why hire a lodging in a house unknown
 For one whose tenderest thoughts all hover round your own?
 This second weaning, needless as it is,
 How does it lacerate both your heart and his!
 The indented stick, that loses day by day
 Notch after notch, till all are smoothed away, 560
 Bears witness, long ere his dismissal come,
 With what intense desire he wants his home.
 But though the joys he hopes beneath your roof
 Bid fair enough to answer in the proof,
 Harmless and safe, and natural, as they are,
 A disappointment waits him even there:
 Arrived, he feels an unexpected change,
 He blushes, hangs his head, is shy and strange;
 No longer takes, as once with fearless ease,
 His favourite stand between his father's knees 570
 But seeks the corner of some distant seat,
 And eyes the door, and watches a retreat;
 And least familiar where he should be most
 Feels all his happiest privileges lost,
 Alas, poor boy!—the natural effect
 Of love by absence chilled into respect.
 Say what accomplishments at school acquired
 Brings he to sweeten fruits so undesired?
 Thou well deservest an alienated son,
 Unless thy conscious heart acknowledge—none; 580
 None that in thy domestic snug recess
 He had not made his own with more address,
 Though some perhaps that shock thy feeling mind,
 And better never learned, or left behind.
 Add too that, thus estranged, thou canst obtain
 By no kind arts his confidence again;
 That here begins with most that long complaint
 Of filial frankness lost and love grown faint,
 Which, oft neglected, in life's waning years
 A parent pours into regardless ears. 590
 Like caterpillars dangling under trees

By slender threads, and swinging in the breeze,
 Which filthily bewray and sore disgrace
 The boughs in which are bred th' unseemly race ;
 While every worm industriously weaves
 And winds his web about the rivelled leaves ;
 So numerous are the follies that annoy
 The mind and heart of every sprightly boy ;
 Imaginations noxious and perverse
 Which admonition can alone disperse. 600
 Th' encroaching nuisance asks a faithful hand,
 Patient, affectionate, of high command,
 To check the procreation of a breed
 Sure to exhaust the plant on which they feed.
 'Tis not enough that Greek or Roman page,
 At stated hours, his freakish thoughts engage ;
 E'en in his pastimes he requires a friend,
 To warn and teach him safely to unbend ;
 O'er all his pleasures gently to preside,
 Watch his emotions, and control their tide ; 610
 And levying thus, and with an easy sway,
 A tax of profit from his very play,
 To impress a value not to be erased
 On moments squandered else, and running all to waste.
 And seems it nothing in a father's eye
 That unimproved those many moments fly ?
 And is he well content his son should find
 No nourishment to feed his growing mind
 But conjugated verbs and nouns declined ?
 For such is all the mental food purveyed 620
 By public hackneys in the schooling trade ;
 Who feed a pupil's intellect with store
 Of syntax, truly, but with little more ;
 Dismiss their cares when they dismiss their flock,
 Machines themselves, and governed by a clock.
 Perhaps a father blest with any brains
 Would deem it no abuse or waste of pains
 To improve this diet at no great expense
 With savoury truth and wholesome common sense :
 To lead his son for prospects of delight 630
 To some not steep though philosophic height,
 Thence to exhibit to his wondering eyes
 Yon circling worlds, their distance, and their size ;
 The moons of Jove, and Saturn's belted ball,
 And the harmonious order of them all ;
 To show him in an insect or a flower
 Such microscopic proofs of skill and power,
 As, hid from ages past, God now displays,

To combat atheists with in modern days ;
 To spread the earth before him, and commend 640
 With designation of the finger's end,
 Its various parts to his attentive note,
 Thus bringing home to him the most remote ;
 To teach his heart to glow with generous flame,
 Caught from the deeds of men of ancient fame :
 And, more than all, with commendation due,
 To set some living worthy in his view,
 Whose fair example may at once inspire
 A wish to copy what he must admire.
 Such knowledge gained betimes and which appears, 650
 Though solid, not too weighty for his years,
 Sweet in itself, and not forbidding sport,
 When health demands it, of athletic sort,
 Would make him,—what some lovely boys have been,
 And more than one perhaps that I have seen—
 An evidence and reprehension both
 Of the mere schoolboy's lean and tardy growth.

Art thou a man professionally tied,
 With all thy faculties elsewhere applied,
 Too busy to intend a meaner care 660
 Than how to enrich thyself, and next, thine heir ;
 Or art thou (as, though rich, perhaps thou art)
 But poor in knowledge, having none to impart :
 Behold that figure, neat, though plainly clad ;
 His sprightly mingled with a shade of sad ;
 Not of a nimble tongue, though now and then
 Heard to articulate like other men ;
 No jester, and yet lively in discourse ;
 His phrase well-chosen, clear, and full of force,
 And his address, if not quite French in ease, 670
 Not English stiff, but frank, and formed to please ;
 Low in the world, because he scorns its arts ;
 A man of letters, manners, morals, parts ;
 Unpatronized, and therefore little known ;
 Wise for himself and his few friends alone—
 In him thy well-appointed proxy see,
 Armed for a work too difficult for thee ;
 Prepared by taste, by learning, and true worth,
 To form thy son, to strike his genius forth ;
 Beneath thy roof, beneath thine eye, to prove 680
 The force of discipline when backed by love ;
 To double all thy pleasure in thy child,
 His mind informed, his morals undefiled.
 Safe under such a wing, the boy shall show
 No spots contracted among grooms below

Nor taint his speech with meannesses, designed
 By footman Tom for witty and refined.
 There, in his commerce with the liveried herd,
 Lurks the contagion chiefly to be feared ;
 For since (so fashion dictates) all, who claim 690
 A higher than a mere plebeian fame,
 Find it expedient, come what mischief may,
 To entertain a thief or two in pay,
 (And they that can afford the expense of more,
 Some half a dozen, and some half a score,)
 Great cause occurs to save him from a band
 So sure to spoil him, and so near at hand ;
 A point secured, if once he be supplied
 With some such Mentor always at his side.
 Are such men rare ? Perhaps they would abound 700
 Were occupation easier to be found,
 Were education, else so sure to fail,
 Conducted on a manageable scale,
 And schools, that have outlived all just esteem,
 Exchanged for the secure domestic scheme.—
 But having found him, be thou duke or earl,
 Show thou hast sense enough to prize the pearl,
 And, as thou wouldst the advancement of thine heir
 In all good faculties beneath his care,
 Respect, as is but rational and just, 710
 A man deemed worthy of so dear a trust.
 Despised by thee, what more can he expect
 From youthful folly than the same neglect ?
 A flat and fatal negative obtains
 That instant upon all his future pains ;
 His lessons tire, his mild rebukes offend,
 And all the instructions of thy son's best friend
 Are a stream choked, or trickling to no end.
 Doom him not then to solitary meals ;
 But recollect that he has sense, and feels ; 720
 And that, possessor of a soul refined,
 An upright heart, and cultivated mind,
 His post not mean, his talents not unknown,
 He deems it hard to vegetate alone.
 And if admitted at thy board he sit
 Account him no just mark for idle wit ;
 Offend not him whom modesty restrains
 From repartee with jokes that he disdains ;
 Much less transfix his feelings with an oath ;
 Nor frown, unless he vanish with the cloth.— 730
 And, trust me, his utility may reach
 To more than he is hired or bound to teach,

Much trash unuttered, and some ills undone,
Through reverence of the censor of thy son.

But, if thy table be indeed unclean,
Foul with excess, and with discourse obscene,
And thou a wretch, whom, following her old plan,
The world accounts an honourable man,
Because forsooth thy courage has been tried,
And stood the test, perhaps on the wrong side ; 740
Though thou hadst never grace enough to prove
That anything but vice could win thy love ;—
Or hast thou a polite, card-playing wife,
Chained to the routs that she frequents for life ;
Who, just when industry begins to snore,
Flies, winged with joy, to some coach-crowded door ;
And thrice in every winter throngs thine own
With half the chariots and sedans in town,
Thyself meanwhile e'en shifting as thou mayst ;
Not very sober, though, nor very chaste ;— 750
Or is thine house, though less superb thy rank,
If not a scene of pleasure, a mere blank,
And thou at best, and in thy soberest mood,
A trifier vain, and empty of all good ?
Though mercy for thyself thou canst have none,
Hear Nature plead, show mercy to thy son.
Saved from his home, where every day brings forth
Some mischief fatal to his future worth,
Find him a better in a distant spot,
Within some pious pastor's humble cot, 760
Where vile example (yours I chiefly mean,
The most seducing, and the oftenest seen)
May never more be stamped upon his breast,
Not yet perhaps incurably impressed.
Where early rest makes early rising sure
Disease or comes not or finds easy cure,
Prevented much by diet neat and plain ;
Or, if it enter, soon starved out again.
Where all the attention of his faithful host,
Discreetly limited to two at most, 770
May raise such fruits as shall reward his care,
And not at last evaporate in air :
Where, stillness aiding study, and his mind
Serene, and to his duties much inclined,
Not occupied in day-dreams, as at home,
Of pleasures past, or follies yet to come,
His virtuous toil may terminate at last
In settled habit and decided taste.—
But whom do I advise ? the fashion-led,

The incorrigibly wrong, the deaf, the dead ! 780
 Whom care and cool deliberation suit
 Not better much than spectacles a brute ;
 Who, if their sons some slight tuition share,
 Deem it of no great moment whose, or where ;
 Too proud to adopt the thoughts of one unknown,
 And much too gay to have any of their own.
 ' But, courage, man ! ' methought the Muse replied,
 ' Mankind are various, and the world is wide :
 The ostrich, silliest of the feathered kind,
 And formed of God without a parent's mind, 790
 Commits her eggs, incautious, to the dust,
 Forgetful that the foot may crush the trust ;
 And while on public nurseries they rely,
 Not knowing, and too oft not caring, why,
 Irrational in what they thus prefer,
 No few that would seem wise resemble her.
 But all are not alike. Thy warning voice
 May here and there prevent erroneous choice ;
 And some perhaps, who, busy as they are,
 Yet make their progeny their dearest care, 800
 (Whose hearts will ache, once told what ills may reach
 Their offspring, left upon so wild a beach),
 Will need no stress of argument to enforce
 The expedience of a less adventurous course :
 The rest will slight thy counsel, or condemn :
 But *they* have human feelings ; turn to *them* .'
 To you, then, tenants of life's middle state,
 Securely placed between the small and great,
 Whose character, yet undebauched, retains
 Two-thirds of all the virtue that remains ; 810
 Who, wise yourselves, desire your sons should learn
 Your wisdom and your ways—to you I turn.
 Look round you on a world perversely blind ;
 See what contempt has fallen on human kind ;
 See wealth abused, and dignities misplaced,
 Great titles, offices, and trusts disgraced,
 Long lines of ancestry, renowned of old,
 Their noble qualities all quenched and cold ;
 See Bedlam's closeted and handcuffed charge
 Surpassed in frenzy by the mad at large ; 820
 See great commanders making war a trade,
 Great lawyers, lawyers without study made ;
 Churchmen, in whose esteem their blest employ
 Is odious, and their wages all their joy ;
 Who, far enough from furnishing their shelves
 With gospel lore, turn infidels themselves ;

See womanhood despised, and manhood shamed
 With infamy too nauseous to be named,
 Fops at all corners lady-like in mien,
 Civeted fellows, smelt ere they are seen ; 830
 Else coarse and rude in manners, and their tongue
 On fire with curses, and with nonsense hung ;
 Now flushed with drunkenness, now with whoredom pale,
 Their breath a sample of last night's regale :
 See volunteers in all the vilest arts,
 Men well endowed, of honourable parts,
 Designed by nature wise, but self-made fools ;
 All these, and more like these, were bred at schools.
 And if it chance, as sometimes chance it will,
 That though school-bred the boy be virtuous still, 840
 Such rare exceptions, shining in the dark,
 Prove, rather than impeach, the just remark,
 As here and there a twinkling star descried
 Serves but to show how black is all beside.
 Now look on him, whose very voice in tone
 Just echoes thine, whose features are thine own,
 And stroke his polished cheek of purest red,
 And lay thine hand upon his flaxen head,
 And say, " My boy, the unwelcome hour is come,
 " When thou, transplanted from thy genial home, 850
 " Must find a colder soil and bleaker air,
 " And trust for safety to a stranger's care ;
 " What character, what turn, thou wilt assume
 " From constant converse with I know not whom ;
 " Who there will court thy friendship, with what views,
 " And, artless as thou art, whom thou wilt choose ;
 " Though much depends on what thy choice shall be,
 " Is all chance-medley, and unknown to me."
 Canst thou, the tear just trembling on thy lids,
 And while the dreadful risk foreseen forbids ; 860
 Free too, and under no constraining force,
 Unless the sway of custom warp thy course ;
 Lay such a stake upon the losing side,
 Merely to gratify so blind a guide ?
 Thou canst not ! Nature, pulling at thine heart,
 Condemns the unfatherly, the imprudent part.
 Thou wouldst not, deaf to nature's tenderest plea,
 Turn him adrift upon a rolling sea,
 Nor say, " Go thither," conscious that there lay
 A brood of asps, or quicksands in his way ; 870
 Then, only governed by the self-same rule
 Of natural pity, send him not to school,

No—guard him better. Is he not thine own,
 Thyself in miniature, thy flesh, thy bone?
 And hopest thou not ('tis every father's hope)
 That since thy strength must with thy years elope,
 And thou wilt need some comfort to assuage
 Health's last farewell, a staff of thine old age,
 That then, in recompense of all thy cares,
 Thy child shall show respect to thy gray hairs, 880
 Befriend thee, of all other friends bereft,
 And give thy life its only cordial left?
 Aware then how much danger intervenes,
 To compass that good end, forecast the means.
 His heart, now passive, yields to thy command;
 Secure it thine. Its key is in thine hand.
 If thou desert thy charge, and throw it wide,
 Nor heed what guests there enter and abide,
 Complain not if attachments lewd and base
 Supplant thee in it, and usurp thy place. 890
 But if thou guard its sacred chambers sure
 From vicious inmates, and delights impure,
 Either his gratitude shall hold him fast,
 And keep him warm and filial to the last:
 Or, if he prove unkind, (as who can say
 But being man, and therefore frail, he may)
 One comfort yet shall cheer thine aged heart;
 Howe'er he slight thee, thou hast done thy part.

"Oh, barbarous! wouldst thou with a Gothic hand
 "Pull down the schools—what!—all the schools i' the land;
 "Or throw them up to livery-nags and grooms, 901
 "Or turn them into shops and auction-rooms?"
 A captious question, sir, (and yours is one)
 Deserves an answer similar, or none.
 Wouldst thou, possessor of a flock, employ
 (Apprised that he is such) a careless boy,
 And feed him well, and give him handsome pay,
 Merely to sleep, and let them run astray?
 Survey our schools and colleges, and see
 A sight not much unlike my simile. 910
 From education, as the leading cause,
 The public character its colour draws;
 Thence the prevailing manners take their cast,
 Extravagant or sober, loose or chaste.
 And though I would not advertise them yet,
 Nor write on each—"This building to be let,"
 Unless the world were all prepared to embrace
 A plan well worthy to supply their place;

Yet, backward as they are, and long have been,
To cultivate and keep the MORALS clean,
(Forgive the crime) I wish them, I confess,
Or better managed, or encouraged less.

920

THE DIVERTING HISTORY OF JOHN GILPIN

SHOWING HOW HE WENT FARTHER THAN HE INTENDED AND CAME
SAFE HOME AGAIN

JOHN GILPIN was a citizen
Of credit and renown,
A train-band captain eke was he
Of famous London town.

John Gilpin's spouse said to her dear,
"Though wedded we have been
These twice ten tedious years, yet we
No holiday have seen.

"To-morrow is our wedding-day,
And we will then repair
Unto the Bell at Edmonton,
All in a chaise and pair.

"My sister, and my sister's child,
Myself, and children three,
Will fill the chaise; so you must ride
On horseback after we."

He soon replied, "I do admire
Of womankind but one,
And you are she, my dearest dear,
Therefore it shall be done.

"I am a linen-draper bold,
As all the world doth know,
And my good friend the calender
Will lend his horse to go."

Quoth Mrs. Gilpin, "That's well said;
And for that wine is dear,
We will be furnished with our own,
Which is both bright and clear."

WILLIAM COWPER

John Gilpin kissed his loving wife ;
O'erjoyed was he to find
That though on pleasure she was bent
She had a frugal mind.

The morning came, the chaise was brought,
But yet was not allowed
To drive up to the door, lest all
Should say that she was proud.

So three doors off the chaise was stayed,
Where they did all get in ;
Six precious souls, and all agog
To dash through thick and thin.

Smack went the whip, round went the wheels,
Were never folk so glad,
The stones did rattle underneath,
As if Cheapside were mad.

John Gilpin at his horse's side
Seized fast the flowing mane,
And up he got, in haste to ride,
But soon came down again ;

For saddle-tree scarce reached had he,
His journey to begin,
When, turning round his head, he saw
Three customers come in.

So down he came ; for loss of time,
Although it grieved him sore,
Yet loss of pence, full well he knew,
Would trouble him much more.

'Twas long before the customers
Were suited to their mind,
When Betty screaming came down stairs,
"The wine is left behind !"

"Good lack !" quoth he—"yet bring it me,
My leathern belt likewise,
In which I bear my trusty sword
When I do exercise."

Now Mistress Gilpin (careful soul !)
Had two stone bottles found,
To hold the liquor that she loved,
And keep it safe and sound.

Each bottle had a curling ear
Through which the belt he drew,
And hung a bottle on each side
To make his balance true.

Then over all, that he might be
Equipped from top to toe,
His long red cloak, well brushed and neat,
He manfully did throw.

Now see him mounted once again
Upon his nimble steed,
Full slowly pacing o'er the stones,
With caution and good heed.

But, finding soon a smoother road
Beneath his well-shod feet,
The snorting beast began to trot,
Which galled him in his seat.

So, "Fair and softly," John he cried,
But John he cried in vain;
That trot became a gallop soon,
In spite of curb and rein.

So stooping down, as needs he must
Who cannot sit upright,
He grasped the mane with both his hands
And eke with all his might.

His horse, who never in that sort
Had handled been before,
What thing upon his back had got
Did wonder more and more.

Away went Gilpin, neck or nought; ✓
Away went hat and wig;
He little dreamt, when he set out,
Of running such a rig.

The wind did blow, the cloak did fly,
Like streamer long and gay,
Till, loop and button failing both,
At last it flew away.

Then might all people well discern
The bottles he had slung;
A bottle swinging at each side,
As hath been said or sung.

The dogs did bark, the children screamed,
Up flew the windows all ;
And every soul cried out, " Well done !"
As loud as he could bawl.

Away went Gilpin—who but he ?
His fame soon spread around ;
He carries weight : he rides a race !
'Tis for a thousand pound !

And still, as fast as he drew near,
'Twas wonderful to view,
How in a trice the turnpike-men
Their gates wide open threw.

And now, as he went bowing down
His reeking head full low,
The bottles twain behind his back
Were shattered at a blow.

Down ran the wine into the road,
Most piteous to be seen,
Which made his horse's flanks to smoke
As they had basted been.

But still he seemed to carry weight,
With leathern girdle braced ;
For all might see the bottle-necks
Still dangling at his waist.

Thus all through merry Islington
These gambols he did play,
Until he came unto the Wash
Of Edmonton so gay ;

And there he threw the Wash about
On both sides of the way.
Just like unto a trundling mop,
Or a wild goose at play.

At Edmonton his loving wife
From the balcony spied
Her tender husband, wondering much
To see how he did ride.

" Stop, stop, John Gilpin !—Here's the house !"
They all at once did cry ;
" The dinner waits, and we are tired ;"—
Said Gilpin—" So am I !"

But yet his horse was not a whit
Inclined to tarry there !
For why ?—his owner had a house
Full ten miles off, at Ware.

So like an arrow swift he flew,
Shot by an archer strong ;
So did he fly—which brings me to
The middle of my song.

Away went Gilpin, out of breath,
And sore against his will,
Till at his friend the calender's
His horse at last stood still.

The calender, amazed to see
His neighbour in such trim,
Laid down his pipe, flew to the gate,
And thus accosted him :

“What news ? what news ? your tidings tell ;
Tell me you must and shall—
Say why bareheaded you are come,
Or why you come at all ?”

Now Gilpin had a pleasant wit,
And loved a timely joke ;
And thus unto the calender
In merry guise he spoke :

“I came because your horse would come,
And, if I well forebode,
My hat and wig will soon be here,—
They are upon the road.”

The calender, right glad to find
His friend in merry pin,
Returned him not a single word,
But to the house went in ;

Whence straight he came with hat and wig,
A wig that flowed behind,
A hat not much the worse for wear,
Each comely in its kind.

He held them up, and in his turn
Thus showed his ready wit,
“My head is twice as big as yours,
They therefore needs must fit.

"But let me scrape the dirt away
That hangs upon your face ;
And stop and eat, for well you may
Be in a hungry case."

Said John, "It is my wedding-day,
And all the world would stare,
If wife should dine at Edmonton,
And I should dine at Ware."

So, turning to his horse, he said,
"I am in haste to dine ;
'Twas for your pleasure you came here,
You shall go back for mine."

Ah, luckless speech, and bootless boast !
For which he paid full dear ;
For, while he spake, a braying ass
Did sing most loud and clear ;

Whereat his horse did snort, as he
Had heard a lion roar,
And galloped off with all his might,
As he had done before !

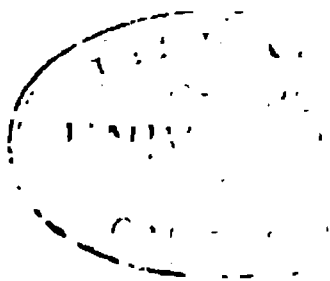
Away went Gilpin, and away
Went Gilpin's hat and wig ;
He lost them sooner than at first ;
For why ?—they were too big.

Now Mistress Gilpin, when she saw
Her husband posting down
Into the country far away,
She pulled out half-a-crown ;

And thus unto the youth she said
That drove them to the Bell,
"This shall be yours when you bring back
My husband safe and well."

The youth did ride, and soon did meet
John coming back amain :
Whom in a trice he tried to stop,
By catching at his rein ;

But, not performing what he meant,
And gladly would have done,
The frightened steed he frightened more,
And made him faster run



MARIA, WIFE OF SIR JOHN THROCKMORTON, BART.
FROM THE ORIGINAL PORTRAIT BY DOWNMAN

Away went Gilpin, and away
 Went postboy at his heels,
 The postboy's horse right glad to miss
 The lumbering of the wheels.

Six gentlemen upon the road
 Thus seeing Gilpin fly,
 With postboy scampering in the rear,
 They raised the hue and cry;

"Stop thief! stop thief!—a highwayman!" ✓
 Not one of them was mute;
 And all and each that passed that way
 Did join in the pursuit.

And now the turnpike gates again
 Flew open in short space;
 The toll-men thinking, as before,
 That Gilpin rode a race.

And so he did, and won it too,
 For he got first to town:
 Nor stopped till where he had got up
 He did again get down.

Now let us sing, Long live the king!
 And Gilpin, long live he!
 And when he next doth ride abroad
 May I be there to see!

POEMS

ADDED BY THE AUTHOR IN SUBSEQUENT EDITIONS OF HIS WORKS

ON THE DEATH OF MRS. THROCKMORTON'S BULLFINCH

YE Nymphs, if e'er your eyes were red
 With tears o'er hapless favourites shed,
 Oh share Maria's grief!
 Her favourite, even in his cage
 (What will not hunger's cruel rage?)
 Assassinated by a thief.

Where Rhenus strays his vines among
 The egg was laid from which he sprung ;
 And, though by nature mute
 Or only with a whistle blessed,
 Well-taught, he all the sounds expressed
 Of flageolet or flute.

The honours of his ebon poll
 Were brighter than the sleekest mole,
 His bosom of the hue
 With which Aurora decks the skies,
 When piping winds shall soon arise
 To sweep up all the dew.

Above, below, in all the house,
 Dire foe alike to bird and mouse,
 No cat had leave to dwell ;
 And Bully's cage supported stood
 On props of smoothest-shaven wood,
 Large built and latticed well.

Well latticed,—but the grate, alas !
 Not rough with wire of steel or brass,
 For Bully's plumage sake,
 But smooth with wands from Ouse's side,
 With which, when neatly peeled and dried,
 The swains their baskets make.

Night veiled the pole. All seemed secure ;
 When, led by instinct sharp and sure
 Subsistence to provide,
 A beast forth sallied on the scout,
 Long backed, long tailed, with whiskered snout,
 And badger-coloured hide.

He, entering at the study door,
 Its ample area 'gan explore ;
 And something in the wind
 Conjectured, sniffing round and round,
 Better than all the books he found,
 Food chiefly for the mind.

Just then, by adverse fate impressed,
 A dream disturbed poor Bully's rest ;
 In sleep he seemed to view
 A rat fast clinging to the cage,
 And, screaming at the sad presage,
 Awoke and found it true.

For, aided both by ear and scent,
 Right to his mark the monster went,—
 Ah, Muse! forbear to speak
 Minute the horrors that ensued;
 His teeth were strong, the cage was wood,—
 He left poor Bully's beak.

He left it—but he should have ta'en!
 That beak, whence issued many a strain
 Of such mellifluous tone,
 Might have repaid him well, I wote,
 For silencing so sweet a throat,
 Fast stuck within his own.

Maria weeps, the Muses mourn;
 So, when by Bacchanalians torn,
 On Thracian Hebrus' side
 The tree-enchanted Orpheus fell,
 His head alone remained to tell
 The cruel death he died.

THE ROSE

THE rose had been washed, just washed in a shower,
 Which Mary to Anna conveyed,
 The plentiful moisture encumbered the flower
 And weighed down its beautiful head.

The cup was all filled, and the leaves were all wet,
 And it seemed, to a fanciful view,
 To weep for the buds it had left with regret
 On the flourishing bush where it grew.

I hastily seized it, unfit as it was
 For a nosegay, so dripping and drowned;
 And swinging it rudely, too rudely, alas!
 I snapped it—it fell to the ground.

"And such," I exclaimed, "is the pitiless part
 Some act by the delicate mind,
 Regardless of wringing and breaking a heart
 Already to sorrow resigned!"

"This elegant rose, had I shaken it less,
 Might have bloomed with its owner awhile;
 And the tear that is wiped with a little address
 May be followed perhaps by a smile."

THE POET'S NEW-YEAR'S GIFT

TO MRS. (AFTERWARDS LADY) THROCKMORTON

MARIA ! I have every good
 For thee wished many a time,
 Both sad and in a cheerful mood,
 But never yet in rhyme.

To wish thee fairer is no need,
 More prudent, or more sprightly,
 Or more ingenious, or more freed
 From temper-flaws unsightly.

What favour then not yet possessed
 Can I for thee require,
 In wedded love already blessed
 To thy whole heart's desire ?

None here is happy but in part ;
 Full bliss is bliss divine ;
 There dwells some wish in every heart,
 And doubtless one in thine.

That wish, on some fair future day
 Which Fate shall brightly gild,
 ('Tis blameless, be it what it may)
 I wish it all fulfilled.

ODE TO APOLLO

ON AN INK-GLASS ALMOST DRIED IN THE SUN

PATRON of all those luckless brains
 That, to the wrong side leaning,
 Indite much metre with much pains,
 And little or no meaning :

Ah, why, since oceans, rivers, streams,
 That water all the nations,
 Pay tribute to thy glorious beams
 In constant exhalations,

Why, stooping from the noon of day,
 Too covetous of drink,
 Apollo, hast thou stolen away
 A poet's drop of ink?

Upborne into the viewless air,
 It floats a vapour now,
 Impelled through regions dense and rare
 By all the winds that blow.

Ordained, perhaps, ere summer flies,
 Combined with millions more,
 To form an Iris in the skies,
 Though black and foul before.

Illustrious drop! and happy then
 Beyond the happiest lot
 Of all that ever passed my pen,
 So soon to be forgot!

Phœbus, if such be thy design,
 To place it in thy bow,
 Give wit, that what is left may shine
 With equal grace below.

CATHARINA

ADDRESSED TO MISS STAPLETON (AFTERWARDS MRS. COURTENAY)

SHE came—she is gone—we have met—
 And meet perhaps never again;
 The sun of that moment is set,
 And seems to have risen in vain.
 Catharina has fled like a dream—
 (So vanishes pleasure, alas!)
 But has left a regret and esteem
 That will not so suddenly pass.

The last evening ramble we made,—
 Catharina, Maria, and I,—
 Our progress was often delayed
 By the nightingale warbling nigh.
 We paused under many a tree,
 And much she was charmed with a tone
 Less sweet to Maria and me,
 Who had witnessed so lately her own.

My numbers that day she had sung,
 And gave them a grace so divine
 As only her musical tongue
 Could infuse into numbers of mine.
 The longer I heard, I esteemed
 The work of my fancy the more,
 And e'en to myself never seemed
 So tuneful a poet before.

Though the pleasures of London exceed
 In number the days of the year,
 Catharina, did nothing impede,
 Would feel herself happier here :
 For the close-woven arches of limes
 On the banks of our river, I know,
 Are sweeter to her many times
 Than all that the city can show.

So it is, when the mind is endued
 With a well-judging taste from above,
 Then, whether embellished or rude,
 'Tis nature alone that we love.
 The achievements of art may amuse,
 May even our wonder excite ;
 But groves, hills, and valleys, diffuse
 A lasting, a sacred delight.

Since, then, in the rural recess
 Catharina alone can rejoice,
 May it still be her lot to possess
 The scene of her sensible choice !
 To inhabit a mansion remote
 From the clatter of street-pacing steeds,
 And by Philomel's annual note
 To measure the life that she leads.

With her book, and her voice, and her lyre,
 To wing all her moments at home ;
 And with scenes that new rapture inspire,
 As oft as it suits her to roam ;
 She will have just the life she prefers
 With little to hope or to fear,
 And ours will be pleasant as hers
 Might we view her enjoying it here.

CATHARINA

THE SECOND PART

ON HER MARRIAGE TO GEORGE COURTENAY, ESQ.

BELIEVE it or not, as you chuse,
The doctrine is certainly true,
That the future is known to the Muse,
And poets are oracles too.
I did but express a desire
To see Catharina at home,
At the side of my friend George's fire,
And lo—she is actually come.

Such prophecy some may despise,
But the wish of a poet and friend
Perhaps is approved in the skies,
And therefore attains to its end.
'Twas a wish that flew ardently forth
From a bosom effectually warmed
With the talents, the graces, and worth
Of the person for whom it was formed.

Maria would leave us, I knew,
To the grief and regret of us all,
But less to our grief could we view
Catharina the Queen of the Hall.
And therefore I wished as I did,
And therefore this union of hands ;
Not a whisper was heard to forbid,
But all cry, Amen ! to the banns.

Since therefore I seem to incur
No danger of wishing in vain
When making good wishes for Her,
I will e'en to my wishes again ;
With one I have made her a wife,
And now I will try with another,
Which I cannot suppress for my life—
How soon I can make her a mother.

THE MORALIZER CORRECTED

A TALE

A HERMIT or, (if 'chance you hold
 That title now too trite and old),
 A man once young, who lived retired
 As hermit could have well desired,
 His hours of study closed at last,
 And finished his concise repast,
 Stoppled his cruse, replaced his book
 Within its customary nook,
 And, staff in hand, set forth to share
 The sober cordial of sweet air,
 Like Isaac, with a mind applied
 To serious thought at evening tide.
 Autumnal rains had made it chill,
 And from the trees that fringed his hill
 Shades slanting at the close of day
 Chilled more his else delightful way.
 Distant a little mile he spied
 A western bank's still sunny side,
 And right toward the favoured place
 Proceeding with his nimblest pace
 In hope to bask a little yet,
 Just reached it when the sun was set.

Your hermit, young and jovial sirs!
 Learns something from whate'er occurs,
 And "Hence," he said, "my mind computes
 The real worth of man's pursuits.
 His object chosen, wealth or fame,
 Or other sublunary game,
 Imagination to his view
 Presents it decked with every hue
 That can seduce him not to spare
 His powers of best exertion there,
 But youth, health, vigour to expend
 On so desirable an end.

Ere long, approach life's evening shades,
 The glow that fancy gave it fades;
 And, earned too late, it wants the grace
 Which first engaged him in the chase."

"True," answered an angelic guide,
 Attendant at the senior's side,—
 "But whether all the time it cost
 To urge the fruitless chase be lost,

Must be decided by the worth
Of that which called his ardour forth.
Trifles pursued, whate'er the event,
Must cause him shame or discontent;
A vicious object still is worse,
Successful there, he wins a curse;
But he whom, e'en in life's last stage,
Endeavours laudable engage,
Is paid at least in peace of mind
And sense of having well designed;
And if, ere he attain his end,
His sun precipitate descend,
A brighter prize than that he meant
Shall recompense his mere intent,
No virtuous wish can bear a date
Either too early or too late."

THE FAITHFUL FRIEND

THE greenhouse is my summer seat;
My shrubs displaced from that retreat
Enjoyed the open air;
Two goldfinches, whose sprightly song
Had been their mutual solace long,
Lived happy prisoners there.

They sang as blithe as finches sing
That flutter loose on golden wing,
And frolic where they list;
Strangers to liberty, 'tis true,
But that delight they never knew,
And therefore never missed.

But nature works in every breast,
With force not easily suppressed;
And Dick felt some desires,
That, after many an effort vain,
Instructed him at length to gain
A pass between his wires.

The open windows seemed to invite
The freeman to a farewell flight;
But Tom was still confined;
And Dick, although his way was clear,
Was much too generous and sincere
To leave his friend behind.

So settling on his cage, by play,
 And chirp, and kiss, he seemed to say,
 "You must not live alone ;"—
 Nor would he quit that chosen stand
 Till I, with slow and cautious hand,
 Returned him to his own.

O ye, who never taste the joys
 Of friendship, satisfied with noise,
 Fandango, ball, and rout !
 Blush when I tell you how a bird
 A prison with a friend preferred
 To liberty without.

PAIRING TIME ANTICIPATED *

A FABLE

I SHALL not ask Jean Jacques Rousseau
 If birds confabulate or no ;
 'Tis clear that they were always able
 To hold discourse, at least in fable ;
 And even the child who knows no better
 Than to interpret by the letter
 A story of a cock and bull,
 Must have a most uncommon skull.

It chanced then, on a winter's day,
 But warm and bright and calm as May,
 The birds, conceiving a design
 To forestall sweet St. Valentine,
 In many an orchard, copse, and grove,
 Assembled on affairs of love,
 And with much twitter and much chatter
 Began to agitate the matter.
 At length a Bullfinch, who could boast
 More years and wisdom than the most,
 Entreated, opening wide his beak,
 A moment's liberty to speak ;
 And, silence publicly enjoined,
 Delivered briefly thus his mind :

* It was one of the whimsical speculations of this philosopher, that all fables which ascribe reason and speech to animals should be withheld from children, as being only vehicles of deception. But what child was ever deceived by them, or can be, against the evidence of his senses ?

"My friends! be cautious how ye treat
The subject upon which we meet;
I fear we shall have winter yet."

A Finch, whose tongue knew no control,
With golden wing and satin poll,
A last year's bird, who ne'er had tried
What marriage means, thus pert replied:

"Methinks the gentleman," quoth she,
"Opposite in the apple tree,
By his good will would keep us single
Till yonder heaven and earth shall mingle;
Or (which is likelier to befall)
Till death exterminate us all.
I marry without more ado;
My dear Dick Redcap, what say you?"

Dick heard, and tweedling, ogling, bridling,
Turning short round, strutting, and sidling,
Attested, glad, his approbation
Of an immediate conjugation.
Their sentiments so well expressed
Influenced mightily the rest;
All paired, and each pair built a nest.

But though the birds were thus in haste,
The leaves came on not quite so fast,
And Destiny, that sometimes bears
An aspect stern on man's affairs,
Not altogether smiled on theirs.
The wind, of late breathed gently forth,
Now shifted east, and east by north;
Bare trees and shrubs but ill, you know,
Could shelter them from rain or snow:
Stepping into their nests, they paddled,
Themselves were chilled, their eggs were addled:
Soon every father-bird and mother
Grew quarrelsome, and pecked each other,
Parted without the least regret,
Except that they had ever met,
And learnt in future to be wiser
Than to neglect a good adviser.

INSTRUCTION

Misses! the tale that I relate
This lesson seems to carry—
Choose not alone a proper mate,
But proper time to marry.

THE NEEDLESS ALARM

A TALE

THERE is a field through which I often pass,
 Thick overspread with moss and silky grass,
 Adjoining close to Kilwick's echoing wood,
 Where oft the bitch-fox hides her hapless brood,
 Reserved to solace many a neighbouring squire,
 That he may follow them through brake and brier,
 Contusion hazarding of neck or spine,
 Which rural gentlemen call sport divine.
 A narrow brook, by rushy banks concealed,
 Runs in a bottom, and divides the field ;
 Oaks intersperse it that had once a head,
 But now wear crests of oven-wood instead ;
 And where the land slopes to its watery bourn
 Wide yawns a gulf beside a ragged thorn ;
 Bricks line the sides, but shivered long ago,
 And horrid brambles interwine below ;
 A hollow scooped, I judge, in ancient time,
 For baking earth, or burning rock to lime.

Not yet the hawthorn bore her berries red,
 With which the fieldfare, wintry guest, is fed ;
 Nor autumn yet had brushed from every spray,
 With her chill hand, the mellow leaves away ;
 But corn was housed, and beans were in the stack ;
 Now therefore issued forth the spotted pack,
 With tails high mounted, ears hung low, and throats
 With a whole gamut filled of heavenly notes,
 For which, alas ! my destiny severe,
 Though ears she gave me two, gave me no ear.

The sun, accomplishing his early march,
 His lamp now planted on heaven's topmost arch
 When, exercise and air my only aim,
 And heedless whither, to that field I came,
 Ere yet with ruthless joy the happy hound
 Told hill and dale that Reynard's track was found,
 Or with the high-raised horn's melodious clang
 All Kilwick * and all Dinglederry * rang.

Sheep grazed the field ; some with soft bosom pressed
 The herb as soft, while nibbling strayed the rest ;
 Nor noise was heard but of the hasty brook,
 Struggling, detained in many a petty nook.

* Two woods belonging to John Throckmorton, Esq.

All seemed so peaceful, that from them conveyed
To me their peace by kind contagion spread.

But when the huntsman, with distended cheek,
'Gan make his instrument of music speak,
And from within the wood that crash was heard,
Though not a hound from whom it burst appeared,
The sheep recumbent and the sheep that grazed,
All huddling into phalanx, stood and gazed,
Admiring, terrified, the novel strain,
Then coursed the field around, and coursed it round again ;
But recollecting, with a sudden thought,
That flight in circles urged advanced them nought,
They gathered close around the old pit's brink,
And thought again—but knew not what to think.

The man to solitude accustomed long
Perceives in every thing that lives a tongue ;
Not animals alone, but shrubs and trees
Have speech for him, and understood with ease ;
After long drought, when rains abundant fall,
He hears the herbs and flowers rejoicing all ;
Knows what the freshness of their hue implies,
How glad they catch the largess of the skies ;
But, with precision nicer still, the mind
He scans of every locomotive kind ;
Birds of all feather, beasts of every name,
That serve mankind or shun them, wild or tame ;
The looks and gestures of their griefs and fears
Have all articulation in his ears ;
He spells them true by intuition's light,
And needs no glossary to set him right.

This truth premised was needful as a text
To win due credence to what follows next.

Awhile they mused ; surveying every face,
Thou hadst supposed them of superior race ;
Their periwigs of wool, and fears combined,
Stamped on each countenance such marks of mind,
That sage they seemed, as lawyers o'er a doubt
Which, puzzling long, at last they puzzle out ;
Or academic tutors teaching youths,
Sure ne'er to want them, mathematic truths
When thus a mutton statelier than the rest,
A ram, the ewes and wethers sad addressed :

" Friends ! we have lived too long. I never heard
Sounds such as these, so worthy to be feared.
Could I believe, that winds for ages pent
In earth's dark womb have found at last a vent,
And from their prison-house below arise,

With all these hideous howlings to the skies,
 I could be much composed, nor should appear,
 For such a cause, to feel the slightest fear.
 Yourselves have seen, what time the thunders rolled
 All night, me resting quiet in the fold.
 Or heard we that tremendous bray alone,
 I could expound the melancholy tone ;
 Should deem it by our old companion made,
 The ass ; for he, we know, has lately strayed,
 And being lost, perhaps, and wandering wide,
 Might be supposed to clamour for a guide.
 But ah ! those dreadful yells what soul can hear
 That owns a carcass, and not quake for fear ?
 Demons produce them doubtless, brazen-clawed
 And fanged with brass the demons are abroad ;
 I hold it therefore wisest and most fit
 That, life to save, we leap into the pit."

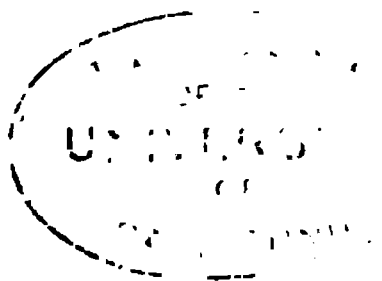
Him answered then his loving mate and true,
 But more discreet than he, a Cambrian Ewe :

"How ! leap into the pit our life to save ?
 To save our life leap all into the grave ?
 For can we find it less ? Contemplate first
 The depth how awful ! falling there, we burst :
 Or should the brambles interposed our fall
 In part abate, that happiness were small ;
 For with a race like theirs no chance I see
 Of peace or ease to creatures clad as we.
 Meantime, noise kills not. Be it Dapple's bray,
 Or be it not, or be it whose it may,
 And rush those other sounds, that seem by tongues
 Of demons uttered, from whatever lungs,
 Sounds are but sounds, and, till the cause appear,
 We have at least commodious standing here.
 Come fiend, come fury, giant, monster, blast
 From earth or hell, we can but plunge at last."

While thus she spake, I fainter heard the peals,
 For Reynard, close attended at his heels
 By panting dog, tired man, and spattered horse,
 Through mere good fortune took a different course.
 The flock grew calm again, and I, the road
 Following that led me to my own abode,
 Much wondered that the silly sheep had found
 Such cause of terror in an empty sound,
 So sweet to huntsman, gentleman, and hound.

MORAL

Beware of desperate steps. The darkest day,
 Live till to-morrow, will have passed away.



COWPER'S MOTHER

FROM THE ORIGINAL PORTRAIT BY D. HEINS

ON THE RECEIPT OF MY MOTHER'S PICTURE OUT OF NORFOLK

THE GIFT OF MY COUSIN, ANN BODHAM

Oh that those lips had language! Life has passed
 With me but roughly since I heard thee last.
 Those lips are thine—thy own sweet smile I see,
 The same that oft in childhood solaced me;
 Voice only fails, else how distinct they say,
 "Grieve not, my child, chase all thy fears away!"
 The meek intelligence of those dear eyes
 (Blest be the art that can immortalize,
 The art that baffles time's tyrannic claim
 To quench it) here shines on me still the same.

Faithful remembrancer of one so dear,
 O welcome guest, though unexpected here!
 Who bidst me honour with an artless song,
 Affectionate, a mother lost so long.

I will obey, not willingly alone,
 But gladly, as the precept were her own:
 And, while that face renews my filial grief,
Fancy shall weave a charm for my relief,

Shall steep me in Elysian reverie,
A momentary dream that thou art she.

My mother! when I learned that thou wast dead,
 Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?
 Hovered thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,
 Wretch even then, life's journey just begun?
 Perhaps thou gavest me, though unfelt, a kiss:
 Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss—
 Ah, that maternal smile! It answers—Yes.
 I heard the bell tolled on thy burial day,
 I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away,
 And, turning from my nursery window, drew
 A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu!
 But was it such?—It was.—Where thou art gone
 Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown.
 May I but meet thee on that peaceful shore,
 The parting word shall pass my lips no more!
 Thy maidens, grieved themselves at my concern,
 Oft gave me promise of thy quick return.
 What ardently I wished I long believed,
 And, disappointed still, was still deceived.
 By expectation every day beguiled,
 Dupe of *to-morrow* even from a child.

*had the picture
 been sent to
 me when I was
 a child?*

Thus many a sad to-morrow came and went,
 Till, all my stock of infant sorrow spent,
 I learned at last submission to my lot;
 But, though I less deplored thee, ne'er forgot.

Where once we dwelt our name is heard no more,
 Children not thine have trod my nursery floor;
 And where the gardener Robin, day by day,
 Drew me to school along the public way,
 Delighted with my bauble coach, and wrapped
 In scarlet mantle warm, and velvet capped,
 'Tis now become a history little known
 That once we called the pastoral house our own
 Short-lived possession! but the record fair
 That memory keeps, of all thy kindness there,
 Still outlives many a storm that has effaced
 A thousand other themes less deeply traced.
 Thy nightly visits to my chamber made,
 That thou mightst know me safe and warmly laid;
 Thy morning bounties ere I left my home,
 The biscuit, or confectionary plum;
 The fragrant waters on my cheek bestowed
 By thy own hand, till fresh they shone and glowed;
 All this, and more endearing still than all,
 Thy constant flow of love, that knew no fall,
 Ne'er roughened by those cataracts and brakes
 That humour interposed too often makes:
 All this still legible in memory's page,
 And still to be so to my latest age,
 Adds joy to duty, makes me glad to pay
 Such honours to thee as my numbers may;
 Perhaps a frail memorial, but sincere,
 Not scorned in heaven, though little noticed here.

Could time, his flight reversed, restore the hours,
 When playing with thy vesture's tissued flowers,
 The violet, the pink, and jessamine,
 I pricked them into paper with a pin
 (And thou wast happier than myself the while,
 Wouldst softly speak, and stroke my head and smile),
 Could those few pleasant days again appear,
 Might one wish bring them, would I wish them here?
 I would not trust my heart—the dear delight
 Seems so to be desired, perhaps I might.—
 But no—what here we call our life is such
 So little to be loved, and thou so much,
 That I should ill requite thee to constrain
 Thy unbound spirit into bonds again.

Then, as a gallant bark from Albion's coast

(The storms all weathered and the ocean crossed)
 Shoots into port at some well-havened isle,
 Where spices breathe, and brighter seasons smile,
 There sits quiescent on the floods that show
 Her beauteous form reflected clear below,
 While airs impregnated with incense play
 Around her, fanning light her streamers gay ;
 So thou, with sails how swift ! hast reached the shore,
 " Where tempests never beat nor billows roar," *
 And thy loved consort on the dangerous tide
 Of life long since has anchored by thy side.
 But me, scarce hoping to attain that rest,
 Always from port withheld, always distressed—
 Me howling blasts drive devious, tempest tost,
 Sails ripped, seams opening wide, and compass lost,
 And day by day some current's thwarting force
 Sets me more distant from a prosperous course.
 Yet, oh, the thought that thou art safe, and he !
 That thought is joy, arrive what may to me.
 My boast is not, that I deduce my birth
 From loins enthroned and rulers of the earth ;
 But higher far my proud pretensions rise—
 The son of parents passed into the skies !
 And now, farewell. Time unrevoked has run
 His wonted course, yet what I wished is done
 By contemplation's help, not sought in vain,
 I seem to have lived my childhood o'er again ;
 To have renewed the joys that once were mine,
 Without the sin of violating thine :
 And, while the wings of fancy still are free
 And I can view this mimic show of thee,
 Time has but half succeeded in his theft—
 Thyself removed, thy power to soothe me left .

THE DOG AND THE WATER-LILY

NO FABLE

THE noon was shady, and soft airs
 Swept Ouse's silent tide,
 When, 'scaped from literary cares,
 I wandered on his side.

* Garth.

My spaniel, prettiest of his race,
 And high in pedigree,
 (Two nymphs * adorned with every grace
 That spaniel found for me)

Now wantoned, lost in flags and reeds,
 Now starting into sight,
 Pursued the swallow o'er the meads
 With scarce a slower flight.

It was the time when Ouse displayed
 His lilies newly blown ;
 Their beauties I intent surveyed
 And one I wished my own.

With cane extended far I sought
 To steer it close to land ;
 But still the prize, though nearly caught,
 Escaped my eager hand.

Beau marked my unsuccessful pains
 With fixed considerate face,
 And puzzling set his puppy brains
 To comprehend the case.

But with a cherup clear and strong
 Dispersing all his dream,
 I thence withdrew, and followed long
 The windings of the stream.

My ramble ended, I returned ;
Beau, trotting far before,
 The floating wreath again discerned,
 And plunging left the shore.

I saw him with that lily cropped
 Impatient swim to meet
 My quick approach, and soon he dropped
 The treasure at my feet.

Charmed with the sight, "The world," I cried,
 "Shall hear of this thy deed :
 My dog shall mortify the pride
 Of man's superior breed :

But chief myself I will enjoin,
 Awake at duty's call,
 To show a love as prompt as thine
 To Him who gives me all."

* Sir Robert Gunning's daughters.

POSTHUMOUS POEMS OF MIDDLE AND LATER LIFE

A TALE, FOUNDED ON A FACT

WHICH HAPPENED IN JANUARY 1779

WHERE Humber pours his rich commercial stream
There dwelt a wretch, who breathed but to blaspheme ;
In subterraneous caves his life he led,
Black as the mine in which he wrought for bread.
When on a day, emerging from the deep,
A Sabbath-day, (such sabbaths thousands keep !)
The wages of his weekly toil he bore
To buy a cock whose blood might win him more ;
As if the noblest of the feathered kind
Were but for battle and for death designed ;
As if the consecrated hours were meant
For sport to minds on cruelty intent ;
It chanced (such chances Providence obey)
He met a fellow-labourer on the way,
Whose heart the same desires had once inflamed ;
But now the savage temper was reclaimed,
Persuasion on his lips had taken place ;
For all plead well who plead the cause of grace.
His iron heart with Scripture he assailed,
Woody him to hear a sermon, and prevailed.
His faithful bow the mighty preacher drew ;
Swift as the lightning-glimpse the arrow flew.
He wept ; he trembled ; cast his eyes around,
To find a worse than he ; but none he found.
He felt his sins, and wondered he should feel ;
Grace made the wound, and grace alone could heal.

Now farewell oaths, and blasphemies, and lies !
He quits the sinner's for the martyr's prize.
That holy day was washed with many a tear,
Gilded with hope, yet shaded, too, by fear.
The next, his swarthy brethren of the mine
Learned, by his altered speech, the change divine !
Laughed when they should have wept, and swore the day
Was nigh when he would swear as fast as they.
" No," said the penitent,— " such words shall share
" This breath no more ; devoted now to prayer.
" O ! if Thou seest (Thine eye the future sees)

"That I shall yet again blaspheme, like these,
 "Now strike me to the ground on which I kneel,
 "Ere yet this heart relapses into steel:
 "Now take me to that heaven I once defied,
 "Thy presence, Thy embrace!"—He spoke, and died!

ON THE TRIAL OF ADMIRAL KEPPEL

KEPPEL returning from afar
 With laurels on his brow
 Comes home to wage a sharper war,
 And with a fiercer foe.

The blow was raised with cruel aim,
 And meant to pierce his heart,
 But lighting on his well-earned fame
 Struck an immortal part.

Slander and envy strive to tear
 His wreath so justly won,
 But truth, who made his cause her care,
 Has bound it faster on.

The charge that was designed to sound
 The signal of disgrace
 Has only called a Navy round
 To praise him to his face.

AN ADDRESS TO THE MOB ON OCCASION OF THE LATE RIOT AT THE HOUSE OF SIR HUGH PALLISER

AND is it thus, ye base and blind
 And fickle as the shifting wind,
 Ye treat a warrior staunch and true,
 Grown old in combating for you?
 Can one false step, and made in haste,
 Thus cancel every service past?
 And have ye all at once forgot
 (As whose deservings have ye not?)
 That Palliser, like Keppel brave,
 Has baffled France on yonder wave;

And when his country asked the stake
Has pledged his life for England's sake !
Though now he sink, oppressed with shame,
Forgetful of his former fame,
Yet Keppel with deserved applause
Proclaims him bold in Britain's cause,
And to his well-known courage pays
The tribute of heroic praise.
Go learn of him whom ye adore,
Whose name now sets ye in a roar,
Whom ye were more than half prepared
To pay with just the same reward,
To render praise where praise is due,
To keep his former deeds in view
Who fought and would have died for you.

THE BEE AND THE PINEAPPLE

A BEE, allured by the perfume
Of a rich Pineapple in bloom,
Found it within a frame enclosed,
And licked the glass that interposed.
Blossoms of apricot and peach,
The flowers that blowed within his reach,
Were arrant drugs compared with that
He strove so vainly to get at.
No rose could yield so rare a treat,
Nor jessamine were half so sweet.
The gardener saw this Much-Ado
(The gardener was the master too),
And thus he said : " Poor restless Bee !
I learn philosophy from thee.
I learn how just it is and wise,
To use what Providence supplies,
To leave fine titles, Lordships, Graces,
Rich pensions, Dignities, and Places—
Those gifts of a superior kind—
To those for whom they were designed.
I learn that comfort dwells alone
In that which Heaven has made our own,
That fools incur no greater pain
Than pleasure coveted in vain."

FRAGMENT

METHINKS I see thee decently arrayed
 In long-flowed nightgown of stuff damask made,
 Thy cassock underneath it closely braced
 With surcingle about thy moderate waist,
 Thy morning wig, grown tawny to the view,
 Though once a grizzle, and thy square-toed shoe.
 The day was when the sacerdotal race
 Esteemed their proper habit no disgrace,
 Or rather when the garb their order wears
 Was not disgraced as now by being theirs.
 I speak of prigs——

IN SEDITIONEM HORRENDAM

CORRUPTELIS GALLICIS, UT FERTUR, LONDINI NUPER EXORTAM

PERFIDA, crudelis, victa et lymphata furore,
 Non armis, laurum Gallia fraude petit.
 Venalem pretio plebem conducit, et urit
 Undique privatas patriciasque domos.

Nequicquam conata suâ, foedissima sperat
 Posse tamen nostrâ nos superare manu.
 Gallia, vana struis! Precibus nunc utere! Vinces,
 Nam mites timidis supplicibusque sumus.

TRANSLATION

FALSE, cruel, disappointed, stung to the heart,
 France quits the warrior's for the assassin's part,
 To dirty hands a dirty bribe conveys,
 Bids the low street and lofty palace blaze.
 Her sons too weak to vanquish us alone,
 She hires the worst and basest of our own.
 Kneel, France! a suppliant conquers us with ease,
 We always spare a coward on his knees.

MONUMENTAL INSCRIPTION TO WILLIAM NORTHCOT

Hic sepultus est
 Inter suorum lacrymas
 GULIELMUS NORTHCOT,
 GULIELMI et MARIE filius
 Unicus, unice dilectus,
 Qui floris ritu succisus est semihiantis,
 Aprilis die septimo,
 1780, Æt. 10.

Care, vale ! Sed non æternum, care, valet !
 Namque iterum tecum, sim modò dignus, ero.
 Tum nihil amplexus poterit divellere nostros,
 Nec tu marcesces, nec lacrymabor ego.

TRANSLATION

FAREWELL ! " But not for ever," Hope replies ;
 Trace but his steps and meet him in the skies !
 There nothing shall renew our parting pain ;
 Thou shalt not wither, nor I weep, again.

RIDDLE

I AM just two and two, I am warm, I am cold,
 And the parent of numbers that cannot be told,
 I am lawful, unlawful—a duty, a fault,—
 I am often sold dear, good for nothing when bought ;
 An extraordinary boon, and a matter of course,
 And yielded with pleasure when taken by force.

TO THE REV. MR. NEWTON

ON HIS RETURN FROM RAMSGATE

THAT ocean you of late surveyed,
 Those rocks, I too have seen,
 But I afflicted and dismayed,
 You tranquil and serene.

You from the flood-controlling steep
 Saw stretched before your view,
 With conscious joy, the threatening deep,
 No longer such to you.

To me the waves that ceaseless broke
 Upon the dangerous coast
 Hoarsely and ominously spoke
 Of all my treasure lost.

Your sea of troubles you have past,
 And found the peaceful shore ;
 I, tempest-tossed, and wrecked at last,
 Come home to port no more.

A CARD

Poor Vestris, grieved beyond all measure
 To have incurred so much displeasure,
 Although a Frenchman, disconcerted,
 And, though light-heeled, yet heavy-hearted,
 Begg humbly to inform his friends,
 Next first of April he intends
 To take a boat and row right down
 To Cuckold's-Point from Richmond town ;
 And as he goes, alert and gay,
 Leap all the bridges in his way.
 The boat, borne downward with the tide,
 Shall catch him safe on t'other side.
 He humbly hopes by this expedient
 To prove himself their most obedient,
 (Which shall be always his endeavour,)
 And jump into the former favour.

ON THE HIGH PRICE OF FISH

(TO MRS. NEWTON)

COCOA-NUT naught,
 Fish too dear,
 None must be bought
 For us that are here :

No lobster on earth,
 That ever I saw,
 To me would be worth
 Sixpence a claw.

So, dear Madam, wait
 Till fish can be got
 At a reasonable rate,
 Whether lobster or not.

Till the French and the Dutch
Have quitted the seas,
And then send as much
And as oft as you please

TO MRS. NEWTON

A NOBLE theme demands a noble verse ;
In such I thank you for your fine oysters.
The barrel was magnificently large,
But, being sent to Olney at free charge,
Was not inserted in the driver's list,
And therefore overlooked, forgot, or missed ;
For, when the messenger whom we despatched
Inquired for oysters, Hob his noddle scratched,
Denying that his waggon or his wain
Did any such commodity contain.
In consequence of which your welcome boon
Did not arrive till yesterday at noon ;
In consequence of which some chanced to die,
And some, though very sweet, were very dry.
Now Madam says, (and what she says must still
Deserve attention, say she what she will,)
That what we call the Diligence, be-case
It goes to London with a swifter pace,
Would better suit the carriage of your gift,
Returning downward with a pace as swift ;
And therefore recommends it with this aim—
To save at least three days,—the price the same ;
For though it will not carry or convey
For less than twelve pence, send whate'er you may,
For oysters, bred upon the salt sea-shore,
Packed in a barrel, they will charge no more.

News have I none that I can deign to write,
Save that it rained prodigiously last night,
And that ourselves were, at the seventh hour,
Caught in the first beginning of the shower ;
But walking, running, and with much ado,
Got home—just time enough to be wet through.
Yet both are well, and, wondrous to be told,
Soused as we were, we yet have caught no cold ;
And wishing just the same good hap to you,
We say, good Madam, and good Sir, Adieu !

TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS

DEAR President, whose art sublime
 Gives perpetuity to Time,
 And bids transactions of a day,
 That fleeting hours would waft away,
 To dark futurity survive,
 And in unfading beauty live,—
 You cannot with a grace decline
 A special mandate of the Nine—
 Yourself, whatever task you choose,
 So much indebted to the Muse.

Thus say the sisterhood :—We come—
 Fix well your pallet on your thumb,
 Prepare the pencil and the tints—
 We come to furnish you with hints.
 French disappointment, British glory,
 Must be the subject of the story.

First strike a curve, a graceful bow,
 Then slope it to a point below ;
 Your outline easy, airy, light,
 Filled up becomes a paper kite.
 Let Independence, sanguine, horrid,
 Blaze, like a meteor in the forehead :
 Beneath (but lay aside your graces)
 Draw six-and-twenty rueful faces,
 Each with a staring, steadfast eye,
 Fixed on his great and good ally.
 France flies the kite—'tis on the wing—
 Britannia's lightning cuts the string.
 The wind that raised it, ere it ceases,
 Just rends it into thirteen pieces,
 Takes charge of every fluttering sheet,
 And lays them all at George's feet.

Iberia, trembling from afar,
 Renounces the confederate war ;
 Her efforts and her arts o'ercome,
 France calls her shattered navies home ;
 Repenting Holland learns to mourn
 The sacred treaties she has torn ;
 Astonishment and awe profound
 Are stamped upon the nations round ;
 Without one friend, above all foes,
 Britannia gives the world repose.

A POETICAL EPISTLE TO LADY AUSTEN

DEAR Anna—between friend and friend
 Prose answers every common end ;
 Serves, in a plain and homely way,
 To express the occurrence of the day ;
 Our health, the weather, and the news,
 What walks we take, what books we chuse,
 And all the floating thoughts we find
 Upon the surface of the mind.

But when a poet takes the pen,
 Far more alive than other men
 He feels a gentle tingling come
 Down to his finger and his thumb,
 Derived from nature's noblest part,
 The centre of a glowing heart ;
 And this is what the world, who knows
 No flights above the pitch of prose,
 His more sublime vagaries slighting,
 Denominates an itch for writing.
 No wonder I, who scribble rhyme
 To catch the triflers of the time,
 And tell them truths divine and clear
 Which, couched in prose, they will not hear,
 Who labour hard to allure and draw
 The loiterers I never saw,
 Should feel that itching and that tingling
 With all my purpose intermingling,
 To your intrinsic merit true,
 When called to address myself to you.

Mysterious are His ways, whose power
 Brings forth that unexpected hour,
 When minds that never met before
 Shall meet, unite, and part no more :
 It is the allotment of the skies,
 The hand of the Supremely Wise,
 That guides and governs our affections
 And plans and orders our connexions :
 Directs us in our distant road,
 And marks the bounds of our abode.
 Thus we were settled when you found us,
 Peasants and children all around us,
 Not dreaming of so dear a friend,
 Deep in the abyss of Silver-End.
 Thus Martha, even against her will,

Perched on the top of yonder hill ;
 And you, though you must needs prefer
 The fairer scenes of sweet Sancerre,
 Are come from distant Loire to choose
 A cottage on the banks of Ouse.
 This page of Providence quite new,
 And now just opening to our view,
 Employs our present thoughts and pains
 To guess and spell what it contains :
 But day by day, and year by year,
 Will make the dark enigma clear ;
 And furnish us, perhaps, at last,
 Like other scenes already past,
 With proof, that we and our affairs
 Are part of a Jehovah's cares ;
 For God unfolds by slow degrees
 The purport of his deep decrees ;
 Sheds every hour a clearer light
 In aid of our defective sight ;
 And spreads at length before the soul,
 A beautiful and perfect whole,
 Which busy man's inventive brain
 Toils to anticipate, in vain.

Say, Anna, had you never known
 The beauties of a rose full blown,
 Could you, though luminous your eye,
 By looking on the bud, descry,
 Or guess, with a prophetic power,
 The future splendour of the flower ?
 Just so the Omnipotent, who turns
 The system of a world's concerns,
 From mere minutiae can educe
 Events of most important use,
 And bid a dawning sky display
 The blaze of a meridian day.
 The works of man tend, one and all,
 As needs they must, from great to small ;
 And vanity absorbs at length
 The monuments of human strength.
 But who can tell how vast the plan
 Which this day's incident began ?
 Too small, perhaps, the slight occasion
 For our dim-sighted observation ;
 It passed unnoticed, as the bird
 That cleaves the yielding air unheard,
 And yet may prove, when understood,
 A harbinger of endless good.

Not that I deem, or mean to call,
 Friendship a blessing cheap or small :
 But merely to remark, that ours,
 Like some of Nature's sweetest flowers,
 Rose from a seed of tiny size,
 That seemed to promise no such prize ;
 A transient visit intervening,
 And made almost without a meaning,
 (Hardly the effect of inclination,
 Much less of pleasing expectation,)
 Produced a friendship, then begun,
 That has cemented us in one ;
 And placed it in our power to prove,
 By long fidelity and love,
 That Solomon has wisely spoken,—
 "A threefold cord is not soon broken."

THE FLATTING MILL

AN ILLUSTRATION

WHEN a bar of pure silver or ingot of gold
 Is sent to be flatted or wrought into length,
 It is passed between cylinders often, and rolled
 In an engine of utmost mechanical strength.

Thus tortured and squeezed, at last it appears
 Like a loose heap of ribbon, a glittering show,
 Like music it tinkles and rings in your ears,
 And, warmed by the pressure, is all in a glow.

This process achieved, it is doomed to sustain
 The thump after thump of a gold-beater's mallet,
 And at last is of service in sickness or pain
 To cover a pill for a delicate palate.

Alas for the poet ! who dares undertake
 To urge reformation of national ill—
 His head and his heart are both likely to ache
 With the double employment of mallet and mill.

If he wish to instruct, he must learn to delight ;
 Smooth, ductile, and even, his fancy must flow,
 Must tinkle and glitter like gold to the sight,
 And catch in its progress a sensible glow.

After all, he must beat it as thin and as fine
 As the leaf that enfolds what an invalid swallows ;
 For truth is unwelcome, however divine,
 And unless you adorn it, a nausea follows.

FRIENDSHIP

WHAT virtue, or what mental grace,
 But men unqualified and base
 Will boast it their possession ?
 Profusion apes the noble part
 Of liberality of heart,
 And dulness of discretion.

If every polished gem we find,
 Illuminating heart or mind,
 Provoke to imitation,
 No wonder friendship does the same,
 That jewel of the brightest flame,
 Or rather constellation.

No knave but boldly will pretend
 The requisites that form a friend,
 A real and a sound one ;
 Nor any fool he would deceive
 But prove as ready to believe,
 And dream that he had found one.

Candid, and generous, and just,
 Boys care but little whom they trust,—
 An error soon corrected ;
 For who but learns in riper years
 That man, when smoothest he appears,
 Is most to be suspected ?

But here again a danger lies,
 Lest, having misemployed our eyes
 And taken trash for treasure,
 We should unwarily conclude
 Friendship a false ideal good,
 A mere Utopian pleasure.

An acquisition rather rare
 Is yet no subject of despair ;
 Nor is it wise complaining,
 If either on forbidden ground,
 Or where it was not to be found,
 We sought without attaining.

No friendship will abide the test
That stands on sordid interest,
Or mean self-love erected ;
Nor such as may a while subsist
Between the sot and sensualist,
For vicious ends connected.

Who seeks a friend should come disposed
To exhibit, in full bloom disclosed,
The graces and the beauties
That form the character he seeks ;
For 'tis a union that bespeaks
Reciprocated duties.

Reciprocation is implied,
And equal truth on either side,
And constantly supported ;
'Tis senseless arrogance to accuse
Another of sinister views,
Your own as much distorted.

But will sincerity suffice ?
It is indeed above all price,
And must be made the basis ;
But every virtue of the soul
Must constitute the charming whole,
All shining in their places.

A fretful temper will divide
The closest knot that may be tied,
With ceaseless sharp corrosion ;
A temper passionate and fierce
May suddenly your joys disperse
At one immense explosion.

In vain the talkative unite
In hopes of permanent delight ;
The secret just committed,
Forgetting its important weight,
They drop through mere desire to prate,
And by themselves outwitted.

How bright soe'er the prospect seems,
All thoughts of friendship are but dreams,
If envy chance to creep in ;
An envious man, if you succeed,
May prove a dangerous foe indeed,
But not a friend worth keeping.

As envy pines at good possessed,
So jealousy looks forth distressed
On good that seems approaching,
And, if success his steps attend,
Discerns a rival in a friend,
And hates him for encroaching.

Hence authors of illustrious name,
Unless belied by common fame,
Are sadly prone to quarrel,
To deem the wit a friend displays
A tax upon their own just praise,
And pluck each other's laurel.

A man renowned for repartee
Will seldom scruple to make free
With friendship's finest feeling ;
Will thrust a dagger at your breast,
And say he wounded you in jest,
By way of balm for healing.

Whoever keeps an open ear
For tattlers will be sure to hear
The trumpet of contention ;
Aspersions is the babblers' trade,
To listen is to lend him aid
And rush into dissension.

A friendship that in frequent fits
Of controversial rage emits
The sparks of disputation,
Like Hand-in-Hand insurance plates,
Most unavoidably creates
The thought of conflagration.

Some fickle creatures boast a soul
True as a needle to the pole,
Their humour yet so various
They manifest their whole life through
The needle's deviations too,
Their love is so precarious.

The great and small but rarely meet
On terms of amity complete ;
Plebeians must surrender,
And yield so much to noble folk,
It is combining fire with smoke,
Obscurity with splendour.

As Irish bogs are always green
Some minds are sleepy and serene
Where heart soe'er is aching ;
They are indeed a bog, that bears
Your unparticipated cares
Unmoved and without quaking.

Courtier and patriot cannot mix
Their heterogeneous politics
Without an effervescence,
Like that of salts with lemon-juice,
Which does not yet like that produce
A friendly coalescence.

Religion should extinguish strife,
And make a calm of human life ;
But friends that chance to differ
On points that God has left at large,
How fiercely will they meet and charge !
No combatants are stiffer.

To prove, alas ! my main intent
Needs no expense of argument,
No cutting and contriving—
Seeking a real friend, we seem
To adopt the chymists' golden dream,
With still less hope of thriving.

Sometimes the fault is all our own,
Some blemish suddenly made known
By trespass or omission :
Sometimes occasion brings to light
Our friend's defect, long hid from sight,
And even from suspicion.

Then judge yourself, and prove your man
As circumspectly as you can,
And, having made election,
Beware no negligence of yours,
Such as a friend but ill endures,
Enfeeble his affection.

That secrets are a sacred trust,
That friends should be sincere and just,
That sympathy befits them,
Are observations on the case
That savour much of commonplace,
And all the world admits them.

But 'tis not timber, lead, and stone,
 An architect requires alone
 To finish a fine building—
 The palace were but half complete,
 If he could possibly forget
 The carving and the gilding.

As similarity of mind,
 Or something not to be defined,
 First fixes our attention ;
 So manners decent and polite,
 The same we practised at first sight,
 Must save it from declension.

The man that hails you Tom or Jack,
 And proves by thumps upon your back
 How well he knows your merit,
 Is such a friend that one had need
 Be very much his friend indeed,
 To pardon or to bear it.

Some act upon this prudent plan,
 " Say little, and hear all you can ;"
 Safe policy, but hateful.
 So barren sands imbibe the shower,
 But render neither fruit nor flower,—
 Unpleasant and ungrateful.

The man I trust, if shy to me,
 Shall find me as reserved as he,
 And deaf to all his pleading ;
 I will withdraw my trust again ;
 Determined not to entertain
 A spy on my proceeding.

These samples—for alas ! at last
 These are but samples, and a taste
 Of evils yet unmentioned—
 May prove the task a task indeed,
 In which 'tis much if we succeed,
 However well-intentioned.

Pursue the search, and you will find
 Wisdom and knowledge of mankind
 To be at least expedient,
 And, after summing all the rest,
 Religion ruling in the breast
 A principal ingredient.

There is a sober serious grace,
A sanctity, in friendship's face,
That proves it heaven-descended.
The love of woman not so pure,
Nor, even when truest, so secure
To last till life is ended.

THE PIPE AND THE SNUFF BOX

SENT TO THE REV. MR. NEWTON, RECTOR OF ST. MARY WOOLNOTH

Says the Pipe to the Snuff-box, "I can't understand
What the ladies and gentlemen see in your face,
That you are in fashion all over the land,
And I am so much fallen into disgrace.

"Do but see what a pretty contemplative air
I give to the company,—pray do but note 'em,—
You would think that the wise men of Greece were all there,
Or, at least, would suppose them the wise men of Gotham.

"My breath is as sweet as the breath of blown roses,
While you are a nuisance where'er you appear ;
There is nothing but snivelling and blowing of noses,
Such a noise as turns any man's stomach to hear."

Then, lifting his lid in a delicate way,
And opening his mouth with a smile quite engaging,
The Box in reply was heard plainly to say,
"What a silly dispute is this we are waging !

"If you have a little of merit to claim,
You may thank the sweet-smelling Virginian weed ;
And I, if I seem to deserve any blame,
The before-mentioned drug in apology plead.

"Thus neither the praise nor the blame is our own,
No room for a sneer, much less a cachinnus ;
We are vehicles, not of tobacco alone,
But of any thing else they may choose to put in us."

A SIMILE LATINISED.

Sors adversa gerit stimulum, sed tendit et alas.
Pungit api similis, sed velut ista fugit.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL.

MY DEAR FRIEND,
If reading verse be your delight,
'Tis mine as much, or more, to write;
But what we would, so weak is man,
Lies oft remote from what we can.
For instance, at this very time
I feel a wish by cheerful rhyme
To soothe my friend, and, had I power,
To cheat him of an anxious hour;
Not meaning (for I must confess,
What 'twere but folly to suppress)
His pleasure or his good alone,
But squinting partly at my own.
But though the sun is flaming high
In the centre of yon arch, the sky,
And he had once (and who but he?)
The name for setting genius free,
Yet whether poets of past days
Yielded him undeservèd praise,
And he by no uncommon lot
Was famed for virtues he had not;
Or whether, which is like enough,
His Highness may have taken huff,
So seldom sought with invocation,
Since it has been the reigning fashion
To disregard his inspiration,—
I seem no brighter in my wits
For all the radiance he emits
Than if I saw, through midnight vapour,
The glimmering of a farthing taper.
Oh for a succedaneum, then,
To accelerate a creeping pen!
Oh for a ready succedaneum
Quod caput, cerebrum, et cranium
Pondere liberet exoso,
Et morbo jam caliginoso!
'Tis here; this oval box, well filled

With best tobacco finely milled,
Beats all Anticyra's pretences
To disengage the encumbered senses.

O Nymph of transatlantic fame,
Where'er thine haunt, whate'er thy name,
Whether reposing on the side
Of Oroonoquo's spacious tide,
Or listening with delight not small
To Niagara's distant fall,
'Tis thine to cherish and to feed
The pungent nose-refreshing weed,
Which, whether pulverised, it gain
A speedy passage to the brain,
Or whether, touched with fire, it rise
In circling eddies to the skies,
Does thought more quicken and refine
Than all the breath of all the Nine—
Forgive the bard, if bard he be,
Who once too wantonly made free,
To touch with a satiric wipe
That symbol of thy power, the pipe;
So may no blight infest thy plains
And no unseasonable rains,
And so may smiling peace once more
Visit America's sad shore;
And thou, secure from all alarms
Of thundering drums and glittering arms,
Rove unconfined beneath the shade
Thy wide expanded leaves have made;
So may thy votaries increase,
And fumigation never cease.
May Newton with renewed delights
Perform thine odoriferous rites,
While clouds of incense half divine
Involve thy disappearing shrine;
And so may smoke-inhaling Bull
Be always filling, never full.

TO LADY AUSTEN

ON A FLOOD AT OLNEY

To watch the storms, and hear the sky
Give all our almanacks the lie;
To shake with cold, and see the plains
In autumn drowned with wintry rains;

'Tis thus I spend my moments here,
 And wish myself a Dutch Mynheer;
 I then should have no need of wit,
 For lumpish Hollander unfit!
 Nor should I then repine at mud,
 Or meadows deluged with a flood;
 But in a bog live well content,
 And find it just my element:
 Should be a clod, and not a man;
 Nor wish in vain for Sister Ann,
 With charitable aid to drag
 My mind out of its proper quag;
 Should have the genius of a boor,
 And no ambition to have more.

THE COLUBRIAD

CLOSE by the threshold of a door nailed fast
 Three kittens sat; each kitten looked aghast.
 I, passing swift and inattentive by,
 At the three kittens cast a careless eye;
 Not much concerned to know what they did there;
 Not deeming kittens worth a poet's care.
 But presently a loud and furious hiss
 Caused me to stop, and to exclaim, "What's this?"
 When lo! upon the threshold met my view,
 With head erect, and eyes of fiery hue,
 A viper, long as Count de Grasse's queue.
 Forth from his head his forked tongue he throws,
 Darting it full against a kitten's nose;
 Who, having never seen in field or house
 The like, sat still and silent as a mouse;
 Only projecting, with attention due,
 Her whiskered face, she asked him, "Who are you?"
 On to the hall went I, with pace not slow,
 But swift as lightning, for a long Dutch hoe:
 With which well armed I hastened to the spot,
 To find the viper, but I found him not.
 And turning up the leaves and shrubs around,
 Found only that he was not to be found.
 But still the kittens, sitting as before,
 Sat watching close the bottom of the door.
 "I hope," said I, "the villain I would kill
 Has slipped between the door and the door's sill;
 And if I make despatch, and follow hard,

No doubt but I shall find him in the yard :"
 For long ere now it should have been rehearsed,
 'Twas in the garden that I found him first.
 E'en there I found him, there the full-grown cat
 His head, with velvet paw, did gently pat ;
 As curious as the kittens erst had been
 To learn what this phenomenon might mean.
 Filled with heroic ardour at the sight,
 And fearing every moment he would bite,
 And rob our household of our only cat
 That was of age to combat with a rat,
 With outstretched hoe I slew him at the door,
 And taught him NEVER TO COME THERE NO MORE.

TO A YOUNG LADY

WITH A PRESENT OF TWO COCKSCOMBS

Two powdered Cockscombs wait at your command,
 And, what is strange, both dressed by Nature's hand ;
 Like other fops they dread a sudden shower,
 And seek a shelter in your closest bower ;
 Showy like them, like them they yield no fruit,
 But then, to make amends, they both are mute.

EPITAPH ON A HARE

HERE lies whom hound did ne'er pursue
 Nor swifter greyhound follow,
 Whose foot ne'er tainted morning dew,
 Nor ear heard huntsman's halloo ;

Old Tiney, surliest of his kind,
 Who, nursed with tender care,
 And to domestic bounds confined,
 Was still a wild Jack hare.

Though duly from my hand he took
 His pittance every night,
 He did it with a jealous look,
 And, when he could, would bite.

His diet was of wheaten bread,
 And milk, and oats, and straw ;
 Thistles, or lettuces instead,
 With sand to scour his maw.

WILLIAM COWPER

On twigs of hawthorn he regaled,
 On pippins' russet peel,
 And, when his juicy salads failed,
 Sliced carrot pleased him well.

A Turkey carpet was his lawn,
 Whereon he loved to bound,
 To skip and gambol like a fawn,
 And swing his rump around.

His frisking was at evening hours,
 For then he lost his fear,
 But most before approaching showers,
 Or when a storm drew near.

Eight years and five round-rolling moons
 He thus saw steal away,
 Dozing out all his idle noons,
 And every night at play.

I kept him for his humour's sake,
 For he would oft beguile
 My heart of thoughts that made it ache,
 And force me to a smile.

But now beneath this walnut shade
 He finds his long last home,
 And waits, in snug concealment laid,
 Till gentler Puss shall come.

He, still more aged, feels the shocks
 From which no care can save,
 And, partner, once of Tiney's box,
 Must soon partake his grave.

ON THE LOSS OF THE ROYAL GEORGE

WRITTEN BY DESIRE OF LADY AUSTEN, WHO WANTED WORDS TO THE
 MARCH IN "SCIPIO."

TOLL for the brave !
 The brave that are no more !
 All sunk beneath the wave,
 Fast by their native shore !

Eight hundred of the brave,
 Whose courage well was tried,
 Had made the vessel heel,
 And laid her on her side.

A land-breeze shook the shrouds,
 And she was overset;
 Down went the Royal George,
 With all her crew complete.

Toll for the brave!
 Brave Kempenfelt is gone;
 His last sea-fight is fought;
 His work of glory done.

It was not in the battle;
 No tempest gave the shock;
 She sprang no fatal leak;
 She ran upon no rock.

His sword was in its sheath;
 His fingers held the pen
 When Kempenfelt went down
 With twice four hundred men.

Weigh the vessel up,
 Once dreaded by our foes!
 And mingle with our cup
 The tear that England owes.

Her timbers yet are sound
 And she may float again,
 Full charged with England's thunder,
 And plough the distant main.

But Kempenfelt is gone,
 His victories are o'er;
 And he and his eight hundred
 Shall plough the wave no more.

IN SUBMERSIONEM NAVIGII CUI GEORGIUS REGALE NOMEN
 INDITUM

PLANGIMUS fortes. Perière fortes,
 Patrium propter periére littus
 Bis quater centum, subito sub alto
 Æquore mersi.

WILLIAM COWPER

Navis innitens lateri jacebat,
 Malus ad summas trepidabat undas,
 Cum levis, funes quatiens, ad imum
 Depulit aura.

Plangimus fortes. Nimis, heu, caducam
 Fortibus vitam voluêre parcæ,
 Nec sinunt ultra tibi nos recentes
 Nectere laurus,

Magne, qui nomen, licet incanorum,
 Traditum ex multis atavis tulisti !
 At tuos olim memorabit ævum
 Omne triumphos.

Non hyems illos furibunda mersit,
 Non mari in clauso scopuli latentes,
 Fissa non rimis abies, nec atrox
 Abstulit ensis.

Navitæ sed tum nimium jocosì
 Voce fallebant hilari laborem,
 Et quiescebat, calamoque dextram im-
 plevrat heros.

Vos, quibus cordi est grave opus piumque,
 Humidum ex alto spoliùm levate,
 Et putrescentes sub aquis amicos
 Reddite amicis !

Hi quidem (sic dîs placuit) fuêre :
 Sed ratis, nondum putris, ire possit
 Rursus in bellum, Britonumque nomen
 Tollere ad astra.

SONG ON PEACE

AIR—" *My fond Shepherds of late*"

No longer I follow a sound ;
 No longer a dream I pursue ;
 Oh Happiness ! not to be found,
 Unattainable treasure, adieu !

I have sought thee in splendour and dress,
 In the regions of pleasure and taste ;
 I have sought thee, and seemed to possess,
 But have proved thee a vision at last.

An humble ambition and hope
 The voice of true wisdom inspires ;
 'Tis sufficient, if Peace be the scope
 And the summit of all our desires.

Peace may be the lot of the mind
 That seeks it in meekness and love ;
 But rapture and bliss are confined
 To the glorified spirits above.

SONG

AIR—" *The Lass of Pattie's Mill* "

WHEN all within is peace,
 How nature seems to smile !
 Delights that never cease
 The livelong day beguile.
 From morn to dewy eve,
 With open hand she showers
 Fresh blessings, to deceive
 And soothe the silent hours.

It is content of heart
 Gives nature power to please ;
 The mind that feels no smart
 Enlivens all it sees,
 Can make a wintry sky
 Seem bright as smiling May,
 And evening's closing eye
 As peep of early day.

The vast majestic globe,
 So beauteously arrayed
 In nature's various robe,
 With wondrous skill displayed,
 Is to a mourner's heart
 A dreary wild at best ;
 It flutters to depart
 And longs to be at rest.

THE DISTRESSED TRAVELLERS ;

OR, LABOUR IN VAIN

An Excellent New Song to a Tune never sung before

1

I sing of a journey to Clifton
 We would have performed if we could,
 Without cart or barrow to lift on
 Poor Mary and me through the mud.
 Slee sla slud,
 Stuck in the mud,
 Oh it is pretty to wade through a flood !

2

So away we went, slipping and sliding,
 Hop, hop, *à la mode de deux* frogs,
 'Tis near as good walking as riding
 When ladies are dressed in their clogs.
 Wheels, no doubt,
 Go briskly about,
 But they clatter and rattle and make such a rout !

3

SHE

"Well ! now I protest it is charming ;
 How finely the weather improves !
 That cloud, though, is rather alarming,
 How slowly and stately it moves !"

HE

"Pshaw ! never mind,
 'Tis not in the wind,
 We are travelling south and shall leave it behind."

4

SHE

"I am glad we are come for an airing,
 For folks may be pounded and penned,
 Until they grow rusty, not caring
 To stir half a mile to an end."

HE

“The longer we stay,
The longer we may;
It's a folly to think about weather or way.”

5

SHE

“But now I begin to be frightened;
If I fall, what a way I should roll!
I am glad that the bridge was indicted,—
Stop! stop! I am sunk in a hole!”

HE

“Nay, never care!
’Tis a common affair;
You’ll not be the last that will set a foot there.”

6

SHE

“Let me breathe now a little, and ponder
On what it were better to do;
That terrible lane I see yonder,
I think we shall never get through.”

HE

“So think I:—
But, by the bye,
We never shall know if we never should try.”

7

SHE

“But should we get there, how shall we get home?
What a terrible deal of bad road we have past!
Slipping and sliding; and if we should come
To a difficult stile, I am ruined at last!
O this lane!
Now it is plain
That struggling and striving is labour in vain.”

8

HE

“Stick fast there while I go and look—”

SHE

"Don't go away, for fear I should fall!"

HE

"I have examined it every nook,
And what you have here is a sample of all.
Come, wheel round,
The dirt we have found
Would be an estate at a farthing a pound."

9

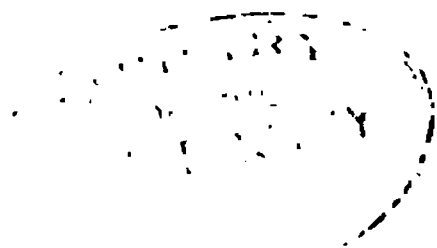
Now, sister Anne, the guitar you must take,
Set it, and sing it, and make it a song;
I have varied the verse for variety's sake,
And cut it off short—because it was long.
'Tis hobbling and lame,
Which critics won't blame,
For the sense and the sound, they say, should be the same.

THE VALEDICTION

FAREWELL, false hearts! whose best affections fail
Like shallow brooks which summer suns exhale!
Forgetful of the man whom once ye chose,
Cold in his cause, and careless of his woes,
I bid you both a long and last adieu,
Cold in my turn, and unconcerned like you.
First, farewell Niger! whom, now duly proved,
I disregard as much as once I loved.
Your brain well furnished, and your tongue well taught
To press with energy your ardent thought,
Your senatorial dignity of face,
Sound sense, intrepid spirit, manly grace,
Have raised you high as talents can ascend,
Made you a peer, but spoilt you for a friend!
Pretend to all that parts have e'er acquired;
Be great, be feared, be envied, be admired;
To fame as lasting as the earth pretend,
But not, hereafter, to the name of friend!
I sent you verse, and, as your lordship knows,
Backed with a modest sheet of humble prose;
Not to recall a promise to your mind,
Fulfilled with ease had you been so inclined.

GEORGE COLMAN

FROM THE PAINTING BY GAINSBOROUGH IN THE NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY



But to comply with feelings, and to give
Proof of an old affection still alive.
Your sullen silence serves at least to tell
Your altered heart ; and so, my lord, farewell !

Next, busy actor on a meaner stage,
Amusement-monger of a trifling age,
Illustrious histrionic patentee,
Terentius, once my friend, farewell to thee !
In thee some virtuous qualities combine
To fit thee for a nobler post than thine,
Who, born a gentleman, hast stooped too low,
To live by buskin, sock, and raree-show.
Thy schoolfellow and partner of thy plays
Where Nichol swung the birch and twined the bays,
And having known thee bearded and full grown,
The weekly censor of a laughing town,
I thought the volume I presumed to send,
Graced with the name of a long-absent friend,
Might prove a welcome gift and touch thine heart,
Not hard by nature, in a feeling part.
But thou, it seems, (what cannot grandeur do,
Though but a dream !) art grown disdainful too ;
And, strutting in thy school of queens and kings
Who fret their hour and are forgotten things,
Hast caught the cold distemper of the day,
And, like his lordship, cast thy friend away.

Oh, Friendship ! cordial of the human breast !
So little felt, so fervently professed !
Thy blossoms deck our unsuspecting years ;
The promise of delicious fruit appears :
We hug the hopes of constancy and truth,
Such is the folly of our dreaming youth ;
But soon, alas ! detect the rash mistake
That sanguine inexperience loves to make ;
And view with tears the expected harvest lost,
Decayed by time, or withered by a frost.
Whoever undertakes a friend's great part
Should be renewed in nature, pure in heart,
Prepared for martyrdom, and strong to prove
A thousand ways the force of genuine love.
He may be called to give up health and gain,
To exchange content for trouble, ease for pain,
To echo sigh for sigh, and groan for groan,
And wet his cheeks with sorrows not his own.
The heart of man, for such a task too frail,
When most relied on is most sure to fail ;
And, summoned to partake its fellow's woe,

Starts from its office like a broken bow.

Votaries of business and of pleasure prove
Faithless alike in friendship and in love.
Retired from all the circles of the gay,
And all the crowds that bustle life away,
To scenes where competition, envy, strife,
Beget no thunder-clouds to trouble life,
Let me, the charge of some good angel, find
One who has known and has escaped mankind,
Polite, yet virtuous, who has brought away
The manners, not the morals, of the day :
With him, perhaps with *her*, (for men have known
No firmer friendships than the fair have shown,)
Let me enjoy, in some unthought-of spot,
All former friends forgiven and forgot,
Down to the close of life's fast fading scene,
Union of hearts, without a flaw between.
'Tis grace, 'tis bounty, and it calls for praise,
If God give health, that sunshine of our days !
And if He add, a blessing shared by few,
Content of heart, more praises still are due :
But if He grant a friend, that boon possessed
Indeed is treasure, and crowns all the rest ;
And giving one, whose heart is in the skies,
Born from above, and made divinely wise,
He gives, what bankrupt nature never can,
Whose noblest coin is light and brittle man,
Gold purer far than Ophir ever knew,
A soul, an image of Himself, and therefore true.

TO THE IMMORTAL MEMORY OF THE HALIBUT

ON WHICH I DINED THIS DAY, MONDAY, APRIL 26, 1784

WHERE hast thou floated ? in what seas pursued
Thy pastime ? When wast thou an egg new spawned,
Lost in the immensity of ocean's waste ?
Roar as they might, the overbearing winds
That rocked the deep, thy cradle, thou wast safe—
And in thy minikin and embryo state,
Attached to the firm leaf of some salt weed,
Didst outlive tempests, such as wrung and racked
The joints of many a stout and gallant bark,
And whelmed them in the unexplored abyss.
Indebted to no magnet and no chart,

Nor under guidance of the polar fire,
 Thou wast a voyager on many coasts,
 Grazing at large in meadows submarine,
 Where flat Batavia just emerging peeps
 Above the brine,—where Caledonia's rocks
 Beat back the surge,—and where Hibernia shoots
 Her wondrous causeway far into the main.
 Wherever thou hast fed, thou little thought'st,
 And I not more, that I should feed on thee.
 Peace, therefore, and good health, and much good fish,
 To him who sent thee! and success, as oft
 As it descends into the billowy gulf,
 To the same drag that caught thee!—Fare thee well!
 Thy lot thy brethren of the slimy fin
 Would envy, could they know that thou wast doomed
 To feel a bard, and to be praised in verse.

THE POPLAR FIELD

THE poplars are felled; farewell to the shade
 And the whispering sound of the cool colonnade
 The winds play no longer and sing in the leaves,
 Nor Ouse on his bosom their image receives.

Twelve years have elapsed since I first took a view
 Of my favourite field, and the bank where they grew;
 And now in the grass behold they are laid
 And the tree is my seat that once lent me a shade!

The blackbird has fled to another retreat
 Where the hazels afford him a screen from the heat,
 And the scene where his melody charmed me before
 Resounds with his sweet-flowing ditty no more.

My fugitive years are all hasting away,
 And I must ere long lie as lowly as they
 With a turf on my breast and a stone at my head,
 Ere another such grove shall arise in its stead,

'Tis a sight to engage me, if anything can,
 To muse on the perishing pleasures of man;
 Though his life be a dream, his enjoyments, I see,
 Have a being less durable even than he.

IDEM LATINE REDDITUM

POPULÆ cecidit gratissima copia silvæ,
 Conticuere susurri, omnisque evanuit umbra.
 Nullæ jam levibus se miscent frondibus auræ,
 Et nulla in fluvio ramorum ludit imago.

Hei mihi ! bis senos dum luctu torqueor annos,
 His cogor silvis suctoque carere recessu,
 Cum sero rediens, stratasque in gramine cernens,
 Insedî arboribus sub quibus errare solebam.

Ah ubi nunc merulæ cantus ? Felicior illam
 Silva tegit, duræ nondum permissa bipenni ;
 Scilicet exustos colles camposque patentes
 Odit et indignans et non rediturus abivit.

Sed qui succisas doleo succidar et ipse,
 Et prius huic parilis quam creverit altera silva
 Flebor, et, exequiis parvis donatus, habebo
 Defixum lapidem tumulique cubantis acervum.

Tam subito periisse videns tam digna manere,
 Agnosco humanas sortes et tristia fata—
 Sit licet ipse brevis volucrique simillimus umbræ
 Est homini brevior citiusque obitura voluptas.

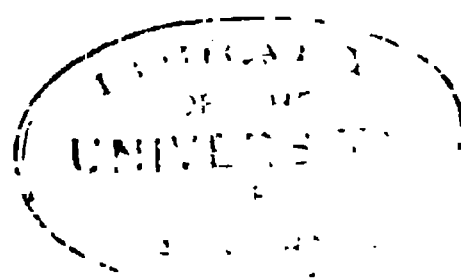
WRITTEN ON A PAGE OF "THE MONTHLY REVIEW"

WHICH HAD SPOKEN OF MR. NEWTON'S OPINIONS AS CANT

THESE critics, who to faith no quarter grant,
 But call it mere hypocrisy and cant
 To make a just acknowledgment of praise
 And thanks to God for governing our ways,
 Approve Confucius more, and Zoroaster,
 Than Christ's own servant, or that servant's Master.

EPITAPH ON DR. JOHNSON

HERE Johnson lies, a sage by all allowed,
 Whom to have bred may well make England proud ;
 Whose prose was eloquence by wisdom taught,
 The graceful vehicle of virtuous thought ;



LADY HESKETH

**FROM AN ENGRAVING BY H. ROBINSON AFTER A DRAWING BY W. HARVEY OF THE
ORIGINAL PICTURE BY P. COTES**

Whose verse may claim, grave, masculine, and strong,
 Superior praise to the mere poet's song ;
 Who many a noble gift from Heaven possessed,
 And faith at last, alone worth all the rest.
 O man, immortal by a double prize,
 By fame on earth, by glory in the skies !

ON THE AUTHOR OF "LETTERS ON LITERATURE"

THE genius of the Augustan age
 His head among Rome's ruins reared,
 And bursting with heroic rage
 When literary Heron appeared,

"Thou hast," he cried, "like him of old
 Who set the Ephesian dome on fire,
 By being scandalously bold
 Attained the mark of thy desire ;

"And for traducing Virgil's name
 Shalt share his merited reward ;
 A perpetuity of fame
 That rots, and stinks and is abhorred."

TO MISS CREUZÉ, ON HER BIRTHDAY

How many between east and west
 Disgrace their parent earth,
 Whose deeds constrain us to detest
 The day that gave them birth !

Not so when Stella's natal morn
 Revolving months restore ;
 We can rejoice that she was born,
 And wish her born once more !

GRATITUDE

ADDRESSED TO LADY HESKETH

THIS cap, that so stately appears,
 With ribbon-bound tassel on high,
 Which seems by the crest that it rears
 Ambitious of brushing the sky :

WILLIAM COWPER

This cap to my cousin I owe,
 She gave it, and gave me beside,
 Wreathed into an elegant bow,
 The ribbon with which it is tied.

This wheel-footed studying chair,
 Contrived both for toil and repose,
 Wide-elbowed, and wadded with hair,
 In which I both scribble and doze,
 Bright-studded to dazzle the eyes,
 And rival in lustre of that
 In which, or astronomy lies,
 Fair Cassiopeia sat :

These carpets, so soft to the foot,
 Caledonia's traffic and pride !
 Oh spare them, ye knights of the boot,
 Escaped from a cross-country ride !
 This table and mirror within,
 Secure from collision and dust,
 At which I oft shave cheek and chin,
 And periwig nicely adjust :

This movable structure of shelves,
 For its beauty admired and its use,
 And charged with octavos and twelves,
 The gayest I had to produce ;
 Where, flaming in scarlet and gold
My poems enchanted I view,
 And hope, in due time, to behold
My Iliad and Odyssey too :

This china, that decks the alcove,
 Which here people call a buffet,
 But what the gods call it above
 Has ne'er been revealed to us yet :
 These curtains, that keep the room warm
 Or cool, as the season demands :
 These stoves, that for pattern and form
 Seem the labour of Mulciber's hands :

All these are not half that I owe
 To one, from our earliest youth
 To me ever ready to show
 Benignity, friendship, and truth ;

SONNET TO A YOUNG LADY ON HER BIRTHDAY 445

For time, the destroyer declared
And foe of our perishing kind,
If even her face he has spared,
Much less could he alter her mind.

Thus compassed about with the goods
And chattels of leisure and ease,
I indulge my poetical moods
In many such fancies as these ;
And fancies I fear they will seem—
Poets' goods are not often so fine ;
The poets will swear that I dream
When I sing of the splendour of mine.

INSCRIPTION FOR A MOSS HOUSE IN THE SHRUBBERY AT WESTON

HERE, free from riot's hated noise,
Be mine the calmer purer joys
A friend or book bestows :
Far from the storms that shake the great
Contentment's gale shall fan my seat
And sweeten my repose.

SONNET TO A YOUNG LADY ON HER BIRTHDAY

DEEM not, sweet rose, that bloomest midst many a thorn,
Thy friend, though to a cloister's shade consigned,
Can e'er forget the charms he left behind,
Or pass unheeded this auspicious morn !
In happier days to brighter prospects born,
O tell thy thoughtless sex, the virtuous mind,
Like thee, content in every state may find,
And look on folly's pageantry with scorn.
To steer with nicest art betwixt the extreme
Of idle mirth and affectation coy :
To blend good sense with elegance and ease :
To bid affliction's eye no longer stream :
Is thine : best gift the unfailing source of joy,
The guide to pleasures which can never cease !

STANZAS

SUBJOINED TO THE YEARLY BILL OF MORTALITY OF THE PARISH
OF ALL SAINTS, NORTHAMPTON

FOR THE YEAR 1787

*Pallida Mors sequo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas
Regumque turrea.—HORACE.*

Pale Death with equal foot strikes wide the door
Of royal halls and hovels of the poor.

WHILE thirteen moons saw smoothly run
The Nen's barge-laden wave,
All these, life's rambling journey done,
Have found their home, the grave.

Was man (frail always) made more frail
Than in foregoing years?
Did famine or did plague prevail,
That so much death appears?

No: these were vigorous as their sires,
Nor plague nor famine came;
This annual tribute Death requires,
And never waives his claim.

Like crowded forest-trees we stand,
And some are marked to fall;
The axe will smite at God's command,
And soon shall smite us all.

Green as the bay-tree, ever green,
With its new foliage on,
The gay, the thoughtless, I have seen;
I passed—and they were gone.

Read, ye that run, the solemn truth
With which I charge my page;
A worm is in the bud of youth
And at the root of age.

No present health can health ensure
For yet an hour to come;
Nor medicine, though it oft can cure,
Can always balk the tomb.

And oh ! that humble as my lot
 And scorned as is my strain,
 These truths, though known, too much forgot,
 I may not teach in vain.

So prays your Clerk with all his heart,
 And, ere he quits the pen,
 Begs *you* for once to take *his* part
 And answer all—"Amen !"

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION

FOR THE YEAR 1788

Quod adest, memento
 Componere æquus. Cætera fluminis
 Ritu feruntur.—HORACE

Improve the present hour, for all beside
 Is a mere feather on a torrent's tide.

COULD I, from heaven inspired, as sure presage
 To whom the rising year shall prove his last,
 As I can number in my punctual page
 And item down the victims of the past ;

How each would trembling wait the mournful sheet,
 On which the press might stamp him next to die ;
 And reading here his sentence, how replete
 With anxious meaning, heavenward turn his eye !

Time then would seem more precious than the joys
 In which he sports away the treasure now ;
 And prayer more seasonable than the noise
 Of drunkards, or the music-drawing bow.

Then doubtless many a trifier, on the brink
 Of this world's hazardous and headlong shore,
 Forced to a pause, would feel it good to think,
 Told that his setting sun must rise no more.

Ah, self-deceived ! Could I, prophetic, say
 Who next is fated and who next to fall,
 The rest might then seem privileged to play ;
 But, naming none, the Voice now speaks to ALL.

Observe the dappled foresters, how light
 They bound, and airy, o'er the sunny glade—
 One falls—the rest, wide-scattered with affright,
 Vanish at once into the darkest shade.

Had we their wisdom, should we, often warned,
 Still need repeated warnings, and at last,
 A thousand awful admonitions scorned,
 Die self-accused of life run all to waste?

Sad waste! for which no after-thrift atones:
 The grave admits no cure for guilt or sin;
 Dewdrops may deck the turf that hides the bones,
 But tears of godly grief ne'er flow within.

Learn then, ye living! by the mouths be taught
 Of all these sepulchres, instructors true,
 That, soon or late, death also is your lot,
 And the next opening grave may yawn for you.

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION

FOR THE YEAR 1789

Placidaque ibi demum morte quievit.—VIRGIL.
 There calm at length he breathed his soul away.

“Oh! most delightful hour by man
 Experienced here below,
 The hour that terminates his span,
 His folly, and his woe!

“Worlds should not bribe me back to tread
 Again life's dreary waste,
 To see again my day o'erspread
 With all the gloomy past.

“My home henceforth is in the skies—
 Earth, seas, and sun adieu!
 All heaven unfolded to my eyes,
 I have no sight for you.”

So spake Aspasio, firm possessed
 Of faith's supporting rod,
 Then breathed his soul into its rest,
 The bosom of his God.

He was a man among the few
 Sincere on virtue's side ;
 And all his strength from Scripture drew
 To hourly use applied.

That rule he prized, by that he feared,
 He hated, hoped, and loved ;
 Nor ever frowned, or sad appeared,
 But when his heart had roved.

For he was frail as thou or I,
 And evil felt within :
 But when he felt it, heaved a sigh,
 And loathed the thought of sin.

Such lived Aspasio ; and at last,
 Called up from earth to heaven,
 The gulf of death triumphant passed,
 By gales of blessing driven.

" *His* joys be *mine*," each reader cries,
 " When my last hour arrives ! "
 " They shall be yours," my Verse replies,
 " Such only be your lives."

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION

FOR THE YEAR 1790

Ne commonentem recta sperne.—BUCHANAN.
 Despise not my good counsel.

He who sits from day to day
 Where the prisoned lark is hung,
 Heedless of his loudest lay
 Hardly knows that he has sung.

Where the watchman in his round
 Nightly lifts his voice on high,
 None accustomed to the sound
 Wakes the sooner for his cry.

So your verse-man I and Clerk
 Yearly in my song proclaim
 Death at hand—yourselves his mark—
 And the foe's unerring aim.

WILLIAM COWPER

Duly at my time I come
 Publishing to all aloud—
 Soon the grave must be your home,
 Soon your only suit a shroud.

But the monitory strain,
 Oft repeated in your ears,
 Seems to sound too much in vain,
 Wins no notice, wakes no fears.

Can a truth, by all confessed
 Of such magnitude and weight,
 Grow, by being oft expressed,
 Trivial as a parrot's prate?

Pleasure's call attention wins,
 Hear it often as we may;
 New as ever seem our sins,
 Though committed every day.

Death and Judgment, Heaven and Hell—
 These alone, so often heard,
 No more move us than the bell
 When some stranger is interred.

Oh then, ere the turf or tomb
 Cover us from every eye,
 Spirit of instruction! come
 Make us learn that we must die.

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION

FOR THE YEAR 179

*Felix, qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas,
 Atque metus omnes et inexorabile fatum
 Subjecit pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis avari!—VIRG.*

Happy the mortal who has traced effects
 To their first cause, cast fear beneath his feet,
 And death, and roaring hell's voracious fires!

THANKLESS for favours from on high,
 Man thinks he fades too soon;
 Though 'tis his privilege to die,
 Would he improve the boon.

But he, not wise enough to scan
 His best concerns aright,
 Would gladly stretch life's little span
 To ages, if he might.

To ages in a world of pain,
 To ages, where he goes
 Galled by affliction's heavy chain,
 And hopeless of repose.

Strange fondness of the human heart
 Enamoured of its harm !
 Strange world, that costs it so much smart,
 And still has power to charm.

Whence has the world her magic power ?
 Why deem we death a foe ?
 Recoil from weary life's best hour,
 And covet longer woe ?

The cause is conscience ;—conscience oft
 Her tale of guilt renews :
 Her voice is terrible, though soft,
 And dread of death ensues.

Then, anxious to be longer spared,
 Man mourns his fleeting breath :
 And evils then seem light compared
 With the approach of Death.

'Tis judgment shakes him ; there's the fear
 That prompts the wish to stay :
 He has incurred a long arrear,
 And must despair to pay.

Pay !—Follow Christ, and all is paid :
 His death your peace ensures ;
 Think on the grave where *He* was laid,
 And calm descend to *yours*.

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION

FOR THE YEAR 1793

De sacris autem hæc sit una sententia, ut conserventur.—CIC. *de Leg.*
 But let us all concur in this one sentiment, that things sacred be inviolate.

He lives who lives to God, alone,
 And all are dead beside ;
 For other source than God is none
 Whence life can be supplied.

To live to God is to requite
His love as best we may ;
To make his precepts our delight,
His promises our stay.

But life, within a narrow ring
Of giddy joys comprised,
Is falsely named, and no such thing,
But rather death disguised.

Can life in them deserve the name,
Who only live to prove
For what poor toys they can disclaim
An endless life above ?

Who, much diseased, yet nothing feel ;
Much menaced, nothing dread ;
Have wounds which only God can heal,
Yet never ask his aid ?

Who deem his house a useless place,
Faith, want of common sense,
And ardour in the Christian race
A hypocrite's pretence ?

Who trample order ; and the day
Which God asserts his own
Dishonour with unhallowed play,
And worship Chance alone ?

If scorn of God's commands, impressed
On word and deed, imply
The better part of man unblessed
With life that cannot die ;

Such want it : and that want, uncured
Till man resigns his breath,
Speaks him a criminal, assured
Of everlasting death.

Sad period to a pleasant course !
Yet so will God repay
Sabbaths profaned without remorse
And Mercy cast away.

LINES COMPOSED FOR A MEMORIAL OF ASHLEY COWPER, Esq.

IMMEDIATELY AFTER HIS DEATH

BY HIS NEPHEW WILLIAM OF WESTON

FAREWELL ! endued with all that could engage
All hearts to love thee, both in youth and age !
In prime of life, for sprightliness enrolled
Among the gay, yet virtuous as the old ;

In life's last stage, (Oh ! blessing rarely found !)
Pleasant as youth with all its blossoms crowned,
Through every period of this changeful state
Unchanged thyself—wise, good, affectionate !

Marble may flatter, and lest this should seem
O'ercharged with praises on so dear a theme,
Although thy worth be more than half supprest,
Love shall be satisfied, and veil the rest.

INSCRIPTION FOR THE TOMB OF MR. HAMILTON

PAUSE here, and think : a monitory rhyme
Demands one moment of thy fleeting time.

Consult life's silent clock, thy bounding vein ;
Seems it to say, " Health here has long to reign " ?
Hast thou the vigour of thy youth ?—an eye
That beams delight ?—a heart untaught to sigh ?
Yet fear. Youth oft-times, healthful and at ease,
Anticipates a day it never sees ;
And many a tomb, like HAMILTON's, aloud
Exclaims, " Prepare thee for an early shroud."

THE NEGRO'S COMPLAINT

FORCED from home and all its pleasures
Afric's coast I left forlorn,
To increase a stranger's treasures
O'er the raging billow's borne.
Men from England bought and sold me,
Paid my price in paltry gold ;
But, though slave they have enrolled me,
Minds are never to be sold.

V

WILLIAM COWPER

Still in thought as free as ever,
 What are England's rights, I ask,
 Me from my delights to sever,
 Me to torture, me to task?
 Fleecy locks and black complexion
 Cannot forfeit nature's claim;
 Skins may differ, but affection
 Dwells in white and black the same.

Why did all-creating nature
 Make the plant for which we toil?
 Sighs must fan it, tears must water,
 Sweat of ours must dress the soil.
 Think, ye masters iron-hearted,
 Lolling at your jovial boards,
 Think how many backs have smarted
 For the sweets your cane affords.

Is there,—as ye sometimes tell us,—
 Is there One who reigns on high?
 Has He bid you buy and sell us,
 Speaking from his throne, the sky?
 Ask him, if your knotted scourges,
 Matches, blood-extorting screws,
 Are the means that duty urges
 Agents of his will to use?

Hark! He answers!—Wild tornadoes
 Strewing yonder sea with wrecks,
 Wasting towns, plantations, meadows,
 Are the voice with which he speaks.
 He, foreseeing what vexations
 Afric's sons should undergo,
 Fixed their tyrants' habitations
 Where his whirlwinds answer—"No."

By our blood in Afric wasted
 Ere our necks received the chain;
 By the miseries that we tasted,
 Crossing in your barks the main;
 By our sufferings, since ye brought us
 To the man-degrading mart,
 All sustained by patience, taught us
 Only by a broken heart;

PITY FOR POOR AFRICANS



Deem our nation brutes no longer,
Till some reason ye shall find
Worthier of regard and stronger
Than the colour of our kind.
Slaves of gold, whose sordid dealings
Tarnish all your boasted powers,
Prove that you have human feelings,
Ere you proudly question ours !

PITY FOR POOR AFRICANS

*Video meliora proboque,
Deteriora sequor.*——

I own I am shocked at the purchase of slaves,
And fear those who buy them and sell them are knaves ;
What I hear of their hardships, their tortures, and groans
Is almost enough to draw pity from stones.

I pity them greatly, but I must be mum,
For how could we do without sugar and rum ?
Especially sugar, so needful we see ;
What ! give up our desserts, our coffee, and tea ?

Besides, if we do, the French, Dutch, and Danes,
Will heartily thank us, no doubt, for our pains :
If we do not buy the poor creatures, they will ;
And tortures and groans will be multiplied still.

If foreigners likewise would give up the trade,
Much more in behalf of your wish might be said ;
But while they get riches by purchasing blacks,
Pray tell me why we may not also go snacks ?

Your scruples and arguments bring to my mind
A story so pat, you may think it is coined
On purpose to answer you out of my mint ;
But I can assure you I saw it in print.

A youngster at school, more sedate than the rest,
Had once his integrity put to the test ;
His comrades had plotted an orchard to rob,
And asked him to go and assist in the job.

He was shocked, sir, like you, and answered—"Oh, no!
 What! rob our good neighbour? I pray you don't go;
 Besides, the man's poor, his orchard's his bread:
 Then think of his children, for they must be fed."

"You speak very fine, and you look very grave,
 But apples we want, and apples we'll have:
 If you will go with us, you shall have a share;
 If not, you shall have neither apple nor pear."

They spoke, and Tom pondered—"I see they will go:
 Poor man! what a pity to injure him so!
 Poor man! I would save him his fruit if I could,
 But staying behind will do him no good."

"If the matter depended alone upon me,
 His apples might hang till they dropped from the tree;
 But since they will take them, I think I'll go too;
 He will lose none by me, though I get a few."

His scruples thus silenced, Tom felt more at ease,
 And went with his comrades the apples to seize;
 He blamed and protested, but joined in the plan;
 He shared in the plunder, but pitied the man.

THE MORNING DREAM

'Twas in the glad season of spring,
 Asleep at the dawn of the day,
 I dreamed what I cannot but sing,
 So pleasant it seemed as I lay.
 I dreamed that, on ocean afloat,
 Far hence to the westward I sailed,
 While the billows high-lifted the boat
 And the fresh-blowing breeze never failed.

In the steerage a woman I saw,
 Such at least was the form that she wore,
 Whose beauty impressed me with awe
 Never taught me by woman before.
 She sat, and a shield at her side
 Shed light, like a sun on the waves,
 And smiling divinely, she cried—
 "I go to make freemen of slaves."

Then raising her voice to a strain
The sweetest that ear ever heard,
She sang of the slave's broken chain
Wherever her glory appeared.
Some clouds, which had over us hung,
Fled, chased by her melody clear,
And methought while she liberty sung
'Twas liberty only to hear.

Thus swiftly dividing the flood
To a slave-cultured island we came
Where a demon, her enemy, stood—
Oppression his terrible name.
In his hand, as the sign of his sway,
A scourge hung with lashes he bore,
And stood looking out for his prey
From Africa's sorrowful shore.

But soon as approaching the land
That goddess-like woman he viewed,
The scourge he let fall from his hand,
With blood of his subjects imbrued.
I saw him both sicken and die,
And, the moment the monster expired,
Heard shouts that ascended the sky
From thousands with rapture inspired.

Awaking, how could I but muse
At what such a dream should betide?
But soon my ear caught the glad news,
Which served my weak thought for a guide,—
That Britannia, renowned o'er the waves
For the hatred she ever has shown
To the black-sceptred rulers of slaves,
Resolves to have none of her own.

SWEET MEAT HAS SOUR SAUCE; OR, THE SLAVE-TRADER IN
THE DUMPS

A TRADER I am to the African shore,
But since that my trading is like to be o'er,
I'll sing you a song that you ne'er heard before,
Which nobody can deny, deny,
Which nobody can deny.

When I first heard the news it gave me a shock
Much like what they call an electrical knock,
And now I am going to sell off my stock,
Which nobody can deny.

'Tis a curious assortment of dainty regales
To tickle the Negroes with when the ship sails,
Fine chains for the neck, and a cat with nine tails,
Which nobody can deny.

Here's supple-jack plenty and store of rat-tan,
That will wind itself round the sides of a man
As close as a hoop round a bucket or can,
Which nobody can deny.

Here's padlocks and bolts and screws for the thumbs
That squeeze them so lovingly till the blood comes ;
They sweeten the temper like comfits or plums,
Which nobody can deny.

When a Negro his head from his victuals withdraws,
And clenches his teeth and thrusts out his paws,
Here's a notable engine to open his jaws,
Which nobody can deny.

Thus going to market, we kindly prepare
A pretty black cargo of African ware
For what they must meet with when they get there,
Which nobody can deny.

'Twould do your heart good to see 'em below
Lie flat on their backs all the way as we go,
Like sprats on a gridiron, scores in a row,
Which nobody can deny.

But ah ! if in vain I have studied an art
So gainful to me, all boasting apart
I think it will break my compassionate heart,
Which nobody can deny.

For oh ! how it enters my soul like an awl !
This pity, which some people self-pity call,
Is sure the most heart-piercing pity of all,
Which nobody can deny.

So this is my song, as I told you before ;
Come, buy off my stock, for I must no more
Carry Cæsars and Pompeys to Sugar-cane shore,
Which nobody can deny, deny,
Which nobody can deny.

EPIGRAM

To purify their wine some people bleed
 A lamb into the barrel, and succeed ;
 No nostrum, planters say, is half so good
 To make fine sugar as a *negro's* blood.
 Now *lamb*s and *negroes* both are harmless things,
 And hence perhaps this wondrous virtue springs.
 'Tis in the blood of innocence alone—
 Good cause why planters never try their own.

SONNET

ADDRESSED TO HENRY COWPER, ESQ.

*On his emphatical and interesting delivery of the defence of Warren Hastings, Esq.,
 in the House of Lords*

COWPER, whose silver voice, tasked sometimes hard,
 Legends prolix delivers in the ears
 (Attentive when thou read'st) of England's peers,
 Let verse at length yield thee thy just reward.

Thou wast not heard with drowsy disregard,
 Expending late on all that length of plea
 Thy generous powers ; but silence honoured thee,
 Mute as e'er gazed on orator or bard.

Thou art not voice alone, but hast beside
 Both heart and head ; and couldst with music sweet
 Of Attic phrase and senatorial tone,
 Like thy renowned forefathers, far and wide
 Thy fame diffuse, praised not for utterance meet
 Of *others'* speech, but magic of *thy own*.

THE YEARLY DISTRESS

OR, TITHING TIME AT STOCK, IN ESSEX

*Verses addressed to a country Clergyman, complaining of the disagreeableness
 of the day annually appointed for receiving the dues at the Parsonage*

COME, ponder well, for 'tis no jest,
 To laugh it would be wrong,
 The troubles of a worthy priest
 The burden of my song.

This priest he merry is and blithe
Three quarters of a year,
But oh ! it cuts him like a scythe
When tithing-time draws near.

He then is full of frights and fears
As one at point to die,
And long before the day appears
He heaves up many a sigh.

For then the farmers come jog, jog,
Along the miry road,
Each heart as heavy as a log,
To make their payments good.

In sooth, the sorrow of such days
Is not to be expressed,
When he that takes and he that pays
Are both alike distressed.

Now, all unwelcome at his gates,
The clumsy swains alight,
With rueful faces and bald pates—
He trembles at the sight.

And well he may, for well he knows
Each bumpkin of the clan,
Instead of paying what he owes,
Will cheat him if he can.

So in they come—each makes his leg,
And flings his head before,
And looks as if he came to beg,
And not to quit a score.

“ And how does Miss and Madam do,
The little boy and all ? ”
“ All tight and well. And how do you,
Good Mr. What-d’ye-call ? ”

The dinner comes, and down they sit :
Were e’er such hungry folk ?
There’s little talking and no wit ;
It is no time to joke.

One wipes his nose upon his sleeve,
One spits upon the floor,
Yet, not to give offence or grieve,
Holds up the cloth before.

The punch goes round, and they are dull
 And lumpish still as ever ;
 Like barrels with their bellies full
 They only weigh the heavier.

At length the busy time begins :
 " Come, neighbours, we must wag "—
 The money chinks, down drop their chins,
 Each lugging out his bag.

One talks of mildew and of frost,
 And one of storms of hail,
 And one of pigs that he has lost
 By maggots at the tail.

Quoth one, " A rarer man than you
 In pulpit none shall hear :
 But yet, methinks, to tell you true,
 You sell it plaguy dear."

Oh, why are farmers made so coarse,
 Or clergy made so fine ?
 A kick that scarce would move a horse
 May kill a sound divine.

Then let the boobies stay at home ;
 'Twould cost him, I dare say,
 Less trouble taking twice the sum
 Without the clowns that pay.

ON MRS. MONTAGU'S FEATHER-HANGINGS

THE birds put off their every hue,
 To dress a room for Montagu.
 The peacock sends his heavenly dyes,
 His rainbows and his starry eyes ;
 The pheasant plumes which round infold
 His mantling neck with downy gold ;
 The cock his arched tail's azure show ;
 And, river-blanch'd, the swan his snow.
 All tribes beside of Indian name,
 That glossy shine, or vivid flame,
 Where rises and where sets the day,

Whate'er they boast of rich and gay,
 Contribute to the gorgeous plan,
 Proud to advance it all they can.
 This plumage neither dashing shower,
 Nor blasts that shake the dripping bower,
 Shall drench again or discompose,
 But, screened from every storm that blows,
 It boasts a splendour ever new,
 Safe with protecting Montagu.

To the same Patroness resort,
 Secure of favour at her court,
 Strong Genius from whose forge of thought
 Forms rise, to quick perfection wrought,
 Which, though new-born, with vigour move,
 Like Pallas springing armed from Jove—
 Imagination scattering round
 Wild roses over furrowed ground,
 Which Labour of his frown beguile,
 And teach Philosophy a smile—
 Wit flashing on Religion's side,
 Whose fires to sacred Truth applied
 The gem, though luminous before,
 Obtrude on human notice more,
 Like sunbeams on the golden height
 Of some tall temple playing bright—
 Well tutored Learning, from his books
 Dismissed with grave, not haughty, looks,
 Their order on his shelves exact
 Not more harmonious or compact
 Than that, to which he keeps confined
 The various treasures of his mind—
 All these to Montagu's repair,
 Ambitious of a shelter there.
 There Genius, Learning, Fancy, Wit,
 Their ruffled plumage calm refit,
 (For stormy troubles loudest roar
 Around their flight who highest soar,)
 And in her eye, and by her aid,
 Shine safe without a fear to fade.

She thus maintains divided sway
 With yon bright regent of the day;
 The Plume and Poet both, we know,
 Their lustre to his influence owe;
 And she the works of Phœbus aiding,
 Both Poet saves and Plume from fading.

TO AN AFFLICTED PROTESTANT LADY IN FRANCE

MADAM,—A stranger's purpose in these lays
Is to congratulate and not to praise.

To give the creature the Creator's due
Were sin in me, and an offence to you.
From man to man or even to woman paid
Praise is the medium of a knavish trade,
A coin by craft for folly's use designed,
Spurious, and only current with the blind.

The path of sorrow, and that path alone,
Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown;
No traveller ever reached that blest abode
Who found not thorns and briers in his road.
The world may dance along the flowery plain,
Cheered as they go by many a sprightly strain:
Where nature has her mossy velvet spread,
With unshod feet they yet securely tread;
Admonished, scorn the caution and the friend,
Bent all on pleasure, heedless of its end.
But He who knew what human hearts would prove,
How slow to learn the dictates of his love,
That, hard by nature and of stubborn will,
A life of ease would make them harder still,
In pity to the souls his grace designed
To rescue from the ruins of mankind,
Called for a cloud to darken all their years,
And said, "Go, spend them in the vale of tears."
O balmy gales of soul-reviving air!
O salutary streams that murmur there!
These flowing from the Fount of Grace above,
Those breathed from lips of everlasting love.
The flinty soil indeed their feet annoys,
Chill blasts of trouble nip their springing joys;
An envious world will interpose its frown
To mar delights superior to its own,
And many a pang experienced still within
Reminds them of their hated inmate, sin;
But ills of every shape and every name,
Transformed to blessings, miss their cruel aim;
And every moment's calm that soothes the breast
Is given in earnest of eternal rest.

Ah, be not sad, although thy lot be cast
Far from the flock and in a boundless waste!
No shepherds' tents within thy view appear,
But the chief Shepherd even there is near;

Thy tender sorrows and thy plaintive strain
 Flow in a foreign land, but not in vain ;
 Thy tears all issue from a source divine,
 And every drop bespeaks a Saviour thine.
 So once in Gideon's fleece the dews were found,
 And drought on all the drooping herbs around.

ANNUS MEMORABILIS, 1789

WRITTEN IN COMMEMORATION OF HIS MAJESTY'S HAPPY RECOVERY

I RANSACKED, for a theme of song,
 Much ancient chronicle, and long ;
 I read of bright embattled fields,
 Of trophied helmets, spears, and shields,
 Of chiefs, whose single arm could boast
 Prowess to dissipate a host :
 Through tomes of fable and of dream
 I sought an eligible theme,
 But none I found, or found them shared
 Already by some happier bard.

To modern times, with Truth to guide
 My busy search, I next applied ;
 Here cities won and fleets dispersed
 Urged loud a claim to be rehearsed,
 Deeds of unperishing renown,
 Our fathers' triumphs and our own.

Thus, as the bee, from bank to bower,
 Assiduous sips at every flower,
 But rests on none till that be found
 Where most nectareous sweets abound,
 So I from theme to theme displayed
 In many a page historic strayed,
 Siege after siege, fight after fight,
 Contemplating with small delight
 (For feats of sanguinary hue
 Not always glitter in my view) ;
 Till, settling on the current year,
 I found the far-sought treasure near ;
 A theme for poetry divine,
 A theme to ennoble even mine,
 In memorable Eighty-nine.

The spring of Eighty-nine shall be
 An era cherished long by me,
 Which joyful I will oft record,
 And thankful, at my frugal board ;

For then the clouds of Eighty-eight,
That threatened England's trembling state
With loss of what she least could spare,
Her sovereign's tutelary care,
One breath of Heaven, that cried—"Restore!"
Chased, never to assemble more:
And far the richest crown on earth,
If valued by its wearer's worth,
The symbol of a righteous reign,
Sat fast on George's brows again.

Then peace and joy again possessed
Our Queen's long-agitated breast;
Such joy and peace as can be known
By sufferers like herself alone,
Who losing, or supposing lost,
The good on earth they valued most,
For that dear sorrow's sake forgo
All hope of happiness below,
Then suddenly regain the prize,
And flash thanksgivings to the skies!

O Queen of Albion—queen of isles!
Since all thy tears were changed to smiles,
The eyes that never saw thee, shine
With joy not unallied to thine,
Transports not chargeable with art
Illume the land's remotest part,
And strangers to the air of courts,
Both in their toils and at their sports,
The happiness of answered prayers,
That gilds thy features, show in theirs.
If they who on thy state attend,
Awe-struck, before thy presence bend,
'Tis but the natural effect
Of grandeur that ensures respect;
But she is something more than queen
Who is beloved where never seen.

ON THE QUEEN'S VISIT TO LONDON

THE NIGHT OF THE 17TH MARCH, 1789

WHEN, long sequestered from his throne,
George took his seat again,
By right of worth, not blood alone,
Entitled here to reign;

Then Loyalty, with all her lamps
New trimmed, a gallant show,
Chasing the darkness and the damps,
Set London in a glow.

'Twas hard to tell of streets or squares
Which formed the chief display ;
These most resembling clustered stars,
Those the long milky way.

Bright shone the roofs, the domes, the spires,
And rockets flew, self-driven,
To hang their momentary fires
Amid the vault of heaven.

So, fire with water to compare,
The ocean serves, on high
Up-spouted by a whale in air,
To express unwieldy joy.

Had all the pageants of the world
In one procession joined,
And all the banners been unfurled
That heralds e'er designed,

For no such sight had England's Queen
Forsaken her retreat
Where George recovered made a scene,
Sweet always, doubly sweet.

Yet glad she came that night to prove,
A witness undescried,
How much the object of her love
Was loved by all beside.

Darkness the skies had mantled o'er
In aid of her design,—
Darkness, O Queen ! ne'er called before
To veil a deed of thine.

On borrowed wheels away she flies,
Resolved to be unknown,
And gratify no curious eyes
That night, except her own.

Arrived, a night like noon she sees,
And hears the million hum ;
As all by instinct, like the bees,
Had known their sovereign come.

Pleased she beheld aloft portrayed
On many a splendid wall
Emblems of health and heavenly aid,
And George the theme of all :

Unlike the enigmatic line,
So difficult to spell,
Which shook Belshazzar at his wine
The night his city fell.

Soon, watery grew her eyes and dim,
But with a joyful tear :
None else, except in prayer for him,
George ever drew from her.

It was a scene in every part
Like those in fable feigned,
And seemed by some magician's art
Created and sustained.

But other magic there, she knew,
Had been exerted none,
To raise such wonders in her view,
Save love of George alone.

That cordial thought her spirits cheered,
And through the cumbrous throng,
Not else unworthy to be feared,
Conveyed her calm along.

So, ancient poets say, serene
The sea-maid rides the waves,
And fearless of the billowy scene
Her peaceful bosom laves.

With more than astronomic eyes
She viewed the sparkling show ;
One Georgian star adorns the skies,
She myriads found below.

Yet let the glories of a night
Like that, once seen, suffice ;
Heaven grant us no such future sight,
Such previous woe the price !

ON THE BENEFIT RECEIVED BY HIS MAJESTY FROM SEA-BATHING

IN THE YEAR 1789

O SOVEREIGN of an isle renowned
 For undisputed sway
 Wherever o'er yon gulf profound
 Her navies wing their way ;

With juster claim she builds at length
 Her empire on the sea,
 And well may boast the waves her strength,
 Which strength restored to thee.

THE COCK-FIGHTER'S GARLAND

MUSE, hide his name of whom I sing,
 Lest his surviving house thou bring
 For his sake into scorn ;
 Nor speak the school from which he drew
 The much or little that he knew,
 Nor place where he was born.

That such a man once was, may seem
 Worthy of record (if the theme
 Perchance may credit win),
 For proof to man what man may prove,
 If grace depart, and demons move
 The source of guilt within.

This man (for since the howling wild
 Disclaims him, man he must be styled)
 Wanted no good below ;
 Gentle he was, if gentle birth
 Could make him such ; and he had worth,
 If wealth can worth bestow.

In social talk and ready jest
 He shone superior at the feast,
 And qualities of mind
 Illustrious in the eyes of those
 Whose gay society he chose
 Possessed of every kind.

Methinks I see him powdered red,
With bushy locks his well-dressed head
Winged broad on either side,
The mossy rosebud not so sweet;
His steeds superb, his carriage neat
As luxury could provide.

Can such be cruel? Such can be
Cruel as hell, and so was he;
A tyrant entertained
With barbarous sports, whose fell delight
Was to encourage mortal fight
'Twixt birds to battle trained.

One feathered champion he possessed,
His darling far beyond the rest,
Which never knew disgrace,
Nor e'er had fought but he made flow
The life-blood of his fiercest foe,
The Cæsar of his race.

It chanced at last, when on a day
He pushed him to the desperate fray,
His courage drooped, he fled.
The master stormed, the prize was lost,
And, instant, frantic at the cost,
He doomed his favourite dead.

He seized him fast, and from the pit
Flew to the kitchen, snatched the spit,
And "Bring me cord!" he cried:
The cord was brought, and, at his word,
To that dire implement, the bird
Alive and struggling tied.

The horrid sequel asks a veil,
And all the terrors of the tale
That can be, shall be, sunk.
Led by the sufferer's screams aright,
His shocked companions view the sight
And him with fury drunk.

All, suppliant, beg a milder fate
For the old warrior at the grate:
He, deaf to pity's call,
Whirled round him rapid as a wheel
His culinary club of steel,
Death menacing on all.

But Vengeance hung not far remote,
 For while he stretched his clamorous throat,
 And heaven and earth defied,
 Big with the curse too closely pent
 That struggled vainly for a vent,
 He tottered, reeled, and died.

'Tis not for us, with rash surmise,
 To point the judgments of the skies ;
 But judgments plain as this,
 That, sent for man's instruction, bring
 A written label on their wing,
 'Tis hard to read amiss.

LINES AFTER THE MANNER OF HOMER

DESCRIPTIVE OF THE OPENING OF A HAMPER

THE straw-stuffed hamper with his ruthless steel
 He opened, cutting sheer the inserted cords
 Which bound the lid and lip secure. Forth came
 The rustling package ; first, bright straw of wheat,
 Or oats, or barley ; next a bottle green,
 Throat-full, clear spirits the contents, distilled
 Drop after drop odorous, by the art
 Of the fair mother of his friend—the Rose.

HYMN

FOR THE USE OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT OLNEY

HEAR, Lord, the song of praise and prayer,
 In heaven thy dwelling-place,
 From infants made the public care
 And taught to seek thy face.

Thanks for thy Word, and for thy day ;
 And grant us, we implore,
 Never to waste in sinful play
 Thy holy sabbaths more.

Thanks that we hear,—but oh, impart
 To each desires sincere,
 That we may listen with our heart,
 And learn as well as hear !

For if vain thoughts the minds engage
Of older far than we
What hope, that, at our heedless age,
Our minds should e'er be free?

Much hope if thou our spirits take
Under thy gracious sway
Who canst the wisest wiser make,
And babes as wise as they.

Wisdom and bliss thy word bestows,
A sun that ne'er declines,
And be thy mercies showered on those
Who placed us where it shines.

LONGING TO BE WITH CHRIST

To Jesus, the Crown of my Hope,
My soul is in haste to be gone ;
Oh bear me, ye cherubim, up,
And waft me away to his throne !

My Saviour whom absent I love,
Whom not having seen I adore ;
Whose name is exalted above
All glory, dominion, and power ;

Dissolve thou the bond, that detains
My soul from her portion in thee,
Ah ! strike off the adamant chains,
And make me eternally free.

When that happy era begins,
When arrayed in thy beauty I shine,
Nor grieve any more, by my sins,
The bosom on which I recline ;

Oh then shall the veil be removed,
And round me thy brightness be poured,
I shall meet Him whom absent I loved,
Shall see him whom unseen I adored.

And then, never more shall the fears,
The trials, temptations, and woes,
Which darken this valley of tears,
Intrude on my blissful repose.

Or, if yet remembered above,
Remembrance no sadness shall raise,
They will be but new signs of thy love,
New themes for my wonder and praise.

Thus the strokes which from sin and from pain
Shall set me eternally free,
Will but strengthen and rivet the chain
Which binds me, my Saviour ! to thee.

ON A MISCHIEVOUS BULL

WHICH THE OWNER OF HIM SOLD AT THE AUTHOR'S INSTANCE

Go ! thou art all unfit to share
The pleasures of this place
With such as its old tenants are,
Creatures of gentler race.

The squirrel here his hoard provides,
Aware of wintry storms,
And woodpeckers explore the sides
Of rugged oaks for worms.

The sheep here smooths the knotted thorn
With frictions of her fleece ;
And here I wander eve and morn,
Like her, a friend to peace.

Ah ! I could pity thee exiled
From this secure retreat—
I would not lose it to be styled
The happiest of the great.

But thou canst taste no calm delight ;
Thy pleasure is to show
Thy magnanimity in fight,
Thy prowess ; therefore, go !

I care not whether east or north,
So I no more may find thee ;
The angry Muse thus sings thee forth,
And claps the gate behind thee.

IMPROMPTU

ON WRITING A LETTER WITHOUT HAVING ANYTHING TO SAY

So have I seen the maids in vain
Tumble and tease a tangled skein ;
They bite the lip and scratch the head,
And cry, " The deuce is in the thread ! "
They torture it and jerk it round,
Till the right end at last is found ;
Then wind, and wind, and wind away,
And what was work is changed to play.

TO MRS. THROCKMORTON

ON HER BEAUTIFUL TRANSCRIPT OF HORACE'S ODE " AD LIBRUM SUUM "

MARIA, could Horace have guessed
What honour awaited his ode
To his own little volume addressed,
The honour which you have bestowed
Who have traced it in characters here,
So elegant, even, and neat,
He had laughed at the critical sneer
Which he seems to have trembled to meet.

" And sneer, if you please," he had said,
" Hereafter a nymph shall arise
" Who shall give me, when you are all dead,
" The glory your malice denies ;
" Shall dignity give to my lay,
" Although but a mere bagatelle ;
" And even a poet shall say,
" Nothing ever was written so well."

INSCRIPTION

FOR A STONE ERECTED AT THE SOWING OF A GROVE OF OAKS AT
CHILLINGTON, THE SEAT OF T. GIFFARD, ESQ. 1790

Other stones the era tell
When some feeble mortal fell ;
I stand here to date the birth
Of these hardy sons of earth.

WILLIAM COWPER

Which shall longest brave the sky,
 Storm and frost—these oaks or I?
 Pass an age or two away,
 I must moulder and decay;
 But the years that crumble me
 Shall invigorate the tree,
 Spread its branch, dilate its size,
 Lift its summit to the skies.

Cherish honour, virtue, truth,
 So shalt thou prolong thy youth:
 Wanting these, however fast
 Man be fixed, and formed to last,
 He is lifeless, even now,
 Stone at heart, and cannot grow.

ANOTHER

FOR A STONE ERECTED ON A SIMILAR OCCASION AT THE SAME PLACE IN
 THE FOLLOWING YEAR

READER! behold a monument
 That asks no sigh or tear,
 Though it perpetuate the event
 Of a great burial here.

TO MRS. KING

ON HER KIND PRESENT TO THE AUTHOR, A PATCHWORK QUILT OF
 HER OWN MAKING

THE Bard, if e'er he feel at all,
 Must sure be quickened by a call
 Both on his heart and head,
 To pay with tuneful thanks the care
 And kindness of a lady fair
 Who deigns to deck his bed.

A bed like this, in ancient time,
 On Ida's barren top sublime,
 (As Homer's Epic shows),
 Composed of sweetest vernal flowers,
 Without the aid of sun or showers,
 For Jove and Juno rose.

Less beautiful, however gay,
Is that which in the scorching day
Receives the weary swain,
Who, laying his long scythe aside,
Sleeps on some bank with daisies pied,
Till roused to toil again.

What labours of the loom I see!
Looms numberless have groaned for me!
Should every maiden come
To scramble for the patch that bears
The impress of the robe she wears,
The bell would toll for some.

And oh, what havoc would ensue!
This bright display of every hue
All in a moment fled!
As if a storm should strip the bowers
Of all their tendrils, leaves, and flowers,—
Each pocketing a shred.

Thanks, then, to every gentle fair,
Who will not come to peck me bare
As bird of borrowed feather,
And thanks to one, above them all,
The gentle fair of Pertenhall,
Who put the whole together.

STANZAS

ON THE LATE INDECENT LIBERTIES TAKEN WITH THE REMAINS OF THE
GREAT MILTON, ANNO 1790

“ME too, perchance, in future days
“The sculptured stone shall show
“With Paphian myrtle or with bays
“Parnassian on my brow.

“But I, or ere that season come,
“Escaped from every care,
“Shall reach my refuge in the tomb,
“And sleep securely there.” *

* Forsitan et nostros ducat de marmore vultus
Nectens aut Paphia myrti aut Parnasside lauri
Fronde comas—At ego securâ pace quiescam.
MILTON in *Manse*.

So sang, in Roman tone and style,
 The youthful bard, ere long
 Ordained to grace his native isle
 With her sublimest song.

Who then but must conceive disdain,
 Hearing the deed unblest
 Of wretches who have dared profane
 His dread sepulchral rest?

Ill fare the hands that heaved the stones
 Where Milton's ashes lay,
 That trembled not to grasp his bones
 And steal his dust away!

O ill-requited bard! neglect
 Thy living worth repaid,
 And blind idolatrous respect
 As much affronts thee dead.

IN MEMORY OF THE LATE JOHN THORNTON, Esq.

POETS attempt the noblest task they can,
 Praising the Author of all good in man,
 And, next, commemorating worthies lost,
 The dead in whom that good abounded most.

Thee, therefore, of commercial fame, but more
 Famed for thy probity from shore to shore;
 Thee, THORNTON! worthy in some page to shine
 As honest and more eloquent than mine,
 I mourn; or, since thrice happy thou must be,
 The world no longer thy abode, not thee.
 Thee to deplore were grief misspent indeed;
 It were to weep that goodness has its meed,
 That there is bliss prepared in yonder sky,
 And glory, for the virtuous when they die.

What pleasure can the miser's fondled hoard
 Or spendthrift's prodigal excess afford
 Sweet as the privilege of healing woe
 By virtue suffered combating below?
 That privilege was thine; Heaven gave thee means
 To illumine with delight the saddest scenes,
 Till thy appearance chased the gloom, forlorn
 As midnight and despairing of a morn.
 Thou hadst an industry in doing good,
 Restless as his who toils and sweats for food;

Avarice in thee was the desire of wealth
 By rust unperishable or by stealth ;
 And if the genuine worth of gold depend
 On application to its noblest end,
 Thine had a value in the scales of Heaven
 Surpassing all that mine or mint had given.
 And, though God made thee of a nature prone
 To distribution boundless of thy own,
 And still by motives of religious force
 Impelled thee more to that heroic course,
 Yet was thy liberality discreet,
 Nice in its choice, and of a tempered heat,
 And, though in act unwearied, secret still,
 As in some solitude the summer rill
 Refreshes, where it winds, the faded green,
 And cheers the drooping flowers, unheard, unseen.

Such was thy charity ; no sudden start,
 After long sleep, of passion in the heart,
 But steadfast principle, and, in its kind,
 Of close relation to the Eternal Mind,
 Traced easily to its true source above,
 To Him whose works bespeak his nature Love.

Thy bounties all were Christian, and I make
 This record of thee for the Gospel's sake :
 That the incredulous themselves may see
 Its use and power exemplified in thee.

TO REV. WALTER BAGOT

EXCUSE FOR DELAY IN WRITING TO HIM

It is a maxim of much weight,
 Worth conning o'er and o'er,
 He who has Homer to translate
 Had need do nothing more.

THE FOUR AGES

A BRIEF FRAGMENT OF AN EXTENSIVE PROJECTED POEM

" I COULD be well content, allowed the use
 Of past experience, and the wisdom gleaned
 From worn-out follies, now acknowledged such,
 To recommence life's trial, in the hope
 Of fewer errors, on a second proof ! "

Thus, while grey evening lulled the wind, and called
 Fresh odours from the shrubbery at my side,
 Taking my lonely winding walk, I mused,
 And held accustomed conference with my heart;
 When from within it thus a voice replied:

“Couldst thou in truth? and art thou taught at length
 This wisdom, and but this, from all the past?
 Is not the pardon of thy long arrear,
 Time wasted, violated laws, abuse
 Of talents, judgments, mercies, better far
 Than opportunity vouchsafed to err
 With less excuse, and, haply, worse effect?”

I heard, and acquiesced: then to and fro
 Oft pacing, as the mariner his deck,
 My gravelly bounds, from self to human kind
 I passed, and next considered, What is man?
 Knows he his origin? can he ascend
 By reminiscence to his earliest date?
 Slept he in Adam? and in those from him
 Through numerous generations, till he found
 At length his destined moment to be born?
 Or was he not, till fashioned in the womb?
 Deep mysteries both! which schoolmen much have toiled
 To unriddle, and have left them mysteries still.

It is an evil incident to man,
 And of the worst, that unexplored he leaves
 Truths useful and attainable with ease,
 To search forbidden deeps, where mystery lies
 Not to be solved, and useless if it might.
 Mysteries are food for angels; they digest
 With ease, and find them nutriment; but man,
 While yet he dwells below, must stoop to glean
 His manna from the ground, or starve, and die.

* * * * *

THE JUDGMENT OF THE POETS.

Two nymphs, both nearly of an age,
 Of numerous charms possessed,
 A warm dispute once chanced to wage
 Whose temper was the best.

The worth of each had been complete
 Had both alike been mild;
 But one, although her smile was sweet,
 Frowned oftener than she smiled;

And in her humour, when she frowned,
Would raise her voice, and roar,
And shake with fury to the ground
The garland that she wore.

The other was of gentler cast,
From all such frenzy clear,
Her frowns were seldom known to last,
And never proved severe.

To poets of renown in song
The nymphs referred the cause,
Who, strange to tell, all judged it wrong,
And gave misplaced applause.

They gentle called, and kind and soft,
The flippant and the scold,
And though she changed her mood so oft,
That failing left untold.

No judges, sure, were e'er so mad,
Or so resolved to err,—
In short, the charms her sister had
They lavished all on her.

Then thus the god, whom fondly they
Their great Inspirer call,
Was heard, one genial summer's day,
To reprimand them all.

“Since thus ye have combined,” he said,
“My favourite nymph to slight,
“Adorning May, that peevish maid,
“With June's undoubted right,

“The minx shall, for your folly's sake,
“Still prove herself a shrew,
“Shall make your scribbling fingers ache,
“And pinch your noses blue.”

YARDLEY OAK

SURVIVOR sole, and hardly such, of all
That once lived here, thy brethren!—at my birth
(Since which I number threescore winters past)
A shattered veteran, hollow-trunked perhaps,

WILLIAM COWPER

As now, and with excoriate forks deform,
 Relicts of ages!—could a mind, imbued
 With truth from Heaven, created thing adore,
I might with reverence kneel and worship thee. ✓

It seems idolatry with some excuse
 When our forefather Druids in their oaks
 Imagined sanctity. The conscience, yet
 Unpurified by an authentic act
 Of amnesty, the meed of blood divine,
 Loved not the light, but, gloomy, into gloom
 Of thickest shades, like Adam after taste
 Of fruit proscribed, as to a refuge, fled..

Thou wast a bauble once; a cup and ball
 Which babes might play with; and the thievish jay,
 Seeking her food, with ease might have purloined
 The auburn nut that held thee, swallowing down
 Thy yet close-folded latitude of boughs
 And all thine embryo vastness at a gulp.
 But fate thy growth decreed; autumnal rains
 Beneath thy parent tree mellowed the soil
 Designed thy cradle; and a skipping deer,
 With pointed hoof dibbling the glebe, prepared
 The soft receptacle, in which, secure,
 Thy rudiments should sleep the winter through.

So fancy dreams. Disprove it, if ye can,
 Ye reasoners broad awake, whose busy search
 Of argument, employed too oft amiss,
 Sifts half the pleasures of short life away!

Thou fell'st mature; and in the loamy clod
 Swelling with vegetative force instinct
 Didst burst thine egg, as theirs the fabled Twins
 Now stars; two lobes, protruding, paired exact;
 A leaf succeeded, and another leaf,
 And, all the elements thy puny growth
 Fostering propitious, thou becamest a twig.

Who lived when thou wast such? Oh couldst thou speak
 As in Dodona once thy kindred trees
 Oracular, I would not curious ask
 The future, best unknown, but at thy mouth
 Inquisitive, the less ambiguous past.
 By thee I might correct, erroneous oft,
 The clock of history, facts and events
 Timing more punctual, unrecorded facts
 Recovering, and misstated setting right—
 Desperate attempt, till trees shall speak again!

Time made thee what thou wast, king of the woods,
 And Time hath made thee what thou art—a cave

For owls to roost in. Once thy spreading boughs
 O'erhung the champaign; and the numerous flocks
 That grazed it stood beneath that ample cope
 Uncrowded, yet safe-sheltered from the storm.
 No flock frequents thee now. Thou hast outlived
 Thy popularity, and art become
 (Unless verse rescue thee awhile) a thing
 Forgotten, as the foliage of thy youth.

While thus through all the stages thou hast pushed
 Of treeship, first a seedling, hid in grass;
 Then twig; then sapling; and, as century rolled
 Slow after century, a giant-bulk
 Of girth enormous, with moss-cushioned root
 Upheaved above the soil, and sides embossed
 With prominent wens globose, till at the last
 The rottenness, which time is charged to inflict
 On other mighty ones, found also thee;—
What exhibitions various hath the world
Witnessed of mutability in all

That we account most durable below!

Change is the diet on which all subsist, ✓ ✓
 Created changeable, and change at last
 Destroys them. Skies uncertain, now the heat
 Transmitting cloudless, and the solar beam
 Now quenching in a boundless sea of clouds,—
Calm and alternate storm, moisture and drought,
Invigorate by turns the springs of life
 In all that live, plant, animal, and man,
~~And in conclusion mar them.~~ Nature's threads,
 Fine passing thought, even in her coarsest works,
 Delight in agitation, yet sustain
 The force that agitates not unimpaired;
 But, worn by frequent impulse, to the cause
 Of their best tone their dissolution owe.

Thought cannot spend itself comparing still
 The great and little of thy lot, thy growth
 From almost nullity into a state
 Of matchless grandeur, and declension thence
 Slow into such magnificent decay.
 Time was when, settling on thy leaf, a fly
 Could shake thee to the root, and time has been
 When tempests could not. At thy firmest age
 Thou hadst within thy bole solid contents,
 That might have ribbed the sides or planked the
 deck

Of some flagged admiral, and tortuous arms,
 The shipwright's darling treasure, didst present

To the four-quartered winds, robust and bold,
 Warped into tough knee-timber,* many a load !
 But the axe spared thee. In those thriftier days
 Oaks fell not, hewn by thousands, to supply
 The bottomless demands of contest waged
 For senatorial honours. Thus to time
 The task was left to whittle thee away
 With his sly scythe, whose ever-nibbling edge,
 Noiseless an atom, and an atom more,
 Disjoining from the rest, has unobserved
 Achieved a labour, which had, far and wide,
 By man performed, made all the forest ring.

Embowelled now, and of thy ancient self
 Possessing nought but the scooped rind,—that seems
 A huge throat calling to the clouds for drink,
 Which it would give in rivulets to thy root,—
 Thou temptest none, but rather much forbiddest
 The feller's toil, which thou couldst ill requite.
 Yet is thy root sincere, sound as the rock,
 A quarry of stout spurs and knotted fangs,
 Which, crooked into a thousand whimsies, clasp
 The stubborn soil, and hold thee still erect.

~~So stands a kingdom~~, whose foundations yet
 Fail not, in virtue and in wisdom laid,
 Though all the superstructure, by the tooth
 Pulverized of venality, a shell
 Stands now, and semblance only of itself !

Thine arms have left thee. Winds have rent them off
 Long since, and rovers of the forest wild
 With bow and shaft have burnt them. Some have left
 A splintered stump, bleached to a snowy white :
 And some memorial none where once they grew.
 Yet life still lingers in thee, and puts forth
 Proof not contemptible of what she can,
 Even where death predominates. The spring
 Thee finds not less alive to her sweet force
 Than yonder upstarts of the neighbouring wood,
 So much thy juniors, who their birth received
 Half a millennium since the date of thine.

But since, although well qualified by age
 To teach, no spirit dwells in thee, nor voice
 May be expected from thee, seated here
 On thy distorted root, with hearers none
 Or prompter save the scene, I will perform

* Knee-timber is found in the crooked arms of oak, which, by reason of their distortion, are easily adjusted to the angle formed where the deck and the ship's sides meet.

Myself the oracle, and will discourse
In my own ear such matter as I may.

One man alone, the father of us all,
Drew not his life from woman ; never gazed,
With mute unconsciousness of what he saw,
On all around him ; learned not by degrees,
Nor owed articulation to his ear ;
But, moulded by his Maker into man,
At once upstood intelligent, surveyed
All creatures, with precision understood
Their purport, uses, properties, assigned
To each his name significant, and, filled
With love and wisdom, rendered back to Heaven
In praise harmonious the first air he drew.
He was excused the penalties of dull
Minority. No tutor charged his hand
With the thought-tracing quill, or tasked his mind
With problems. History, not wanted yet,
Leaned on her elbow, watching Time, whose course,
Eventful, should supply her with a theme.

* * * * *

EPITAPH ON MRS. M. HIGGINS, OF WESTON

LAURELS may flourish round the conqueror's tomb,
But happiest they who win the world to come :
Believers have a silent field to fight,
And their exploits are veiled from human sight.
They in some nook, where little known they dwell,
Kneel, pray in faith, and rout the hosts of hell ;
Eternal triumphs crown their toils divine,
And all those triumphs, Mary, now are thine.

THE RETIRED CAT

A POET's cat, sedate and grave
As poet well could wish to have,
Was much addicted to inquire
For nooks to which she might retire,
And where, secure as mouse in chink,
She might repose, or sit and think.
I know not where she caught the trick,—
Nature perhaps herself had cast her

In such a mould PHILOSOPHIQUE,
 Or else she learned it of her master.
 Sometimes ascending, debonair,
 An apple-tree, or lofty pear,
 Lodged with convenience in the fork,
 She watched the gardener at his work ;
 Sometimes her ease and solace sought
 In an old empty watering-pot,
 There wanting nothing save a fan
 To seem some nymph in her sedan,
 Apparell'd in exactest sort
 And ready to be borne to court.

But love of change, it seems, has place
 Not only in our wiser race ;
 Cats also feel, as well as we,
 That passion's force, and so did she.
 Her climbing, she began to find,
 Exposed her too much to the wind,
 And the old utensil of tin
 Was cold and comfortless within :
 She therefore wished instead of those
 Some place of more serene repose,
 Where neither cold might come, nor air
 Too rudely wanton with her hair,
 And sought it in the likeliest mode
 Within her master's snug abode.

A drawer, it chanced, at bottom lined
 With linen of the softest kind,
 With such as merchants introduce
 From India, for the ladies' use—
 A drawer impending o'er the rest,
 Half open in the topmost chest,
 Of depth enough and none to spare,
 Invited her to slumber there.
 Puss with delight beyond expression
 Surveyed the scene, and took possession.
 Recumbent at her ease ere long,
 And lulled by her own humdrum song,
 She left the cares of life behind,
 And slept as she would sleep her last,
 When in came, housewifely inclined,
 The chambermaid, and shut it fast,
 By no malignity impelled,
 But all unconscious whom it held.

Awakened by the shock, cried Puss,
 " Was ever cat attended thus !
 " The open drawer was left, I see,

"Merely to prove a nest for me.
"For soon as I was well composed,
"Then came the maid, and it was closed.
"How smooth these 'kerchiefs, and how sweet!
"Oh, what a delicate retreat!
"I will resign myself to rest
"Till Sol, declining in the west,
"Shall call to supper, when, no doubt,
"Susan will come and let me out."

The evening came, the sun descended,
And puss remained still unattended.
The night rolled tardily away,
(With her indeed 'twas never day,)
The sprightly morn her course renewed,
The evening gray again ensued,
And puss came into mind no more
Than if entombed the day before.
With hunger pinched, and pinched for room,
She now presaged approaching doom,
Nor slept a single wink, or purred,
Conscious of jeopardy incurred.

That night, by chance, the poet watching
Heard an inexplicable scratching;
His noble heart went pit-a-pat,
And to himself he said—"What's that?"
He drew the curtain at his side
And forth he peeped, but nothing spied;
Yet, by his ear directed, guessed
Something imprisoned in the chest,
And, doubtful what, with prudent care
Resolved it should continue there.
At length, a voice which well he knew,
A long and melancholy mew,
Saluting his poetic ears,
Consoled him, and dispelled his fears;
He left his bed, he trod the floor,
He 'gan in haste the drawers explore,
The lowest first, and without stop
The rest in order to the top;
For 'tis a truth well known to most
That, whatsoever thing is lost,
We seek it, ere it come to light,
In every cranny but the right.
Forth skipped the cat, not now replete
As erst with airy self-conceit,
Nor in her own fond apprehension
A theme for all the world's attention,

But modest, sober, cured of all
 Her notions hyperbolical,
 And wishing for a place of rest
 Anything rather than a chest.
 Then stepped the poet into bed,
 With this reflection in his head :

MORAL

Beware of too sublime a sense
 Of your own worth and consequence.
 The man who dreams himself so great,
 And his importance of such weight,
 That all around in all that's done
 Must move and act for him alone,
 Will learn in school of tribulation
 The folly of his expectation.

ON THE REFUSAL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD TO SUBSCRIBE TO
 HIS TRANSLATION OF HOMER

COULD Homer come himself, distressed and poor,
 And tune his harp at Rhedycina's door,
 The rich old vixen would exclaim (I fear)
 " Begone ! no tramper gets a farthing here ! "

TO THE NIGHTINGALE

WHICH THE AUTHOR HEARD SING ON NEW YEAR'S DAY, 1792

WHENCE is it that amazed I hear
 From yonder withered spray,
 This foremost morn of all the year,
 The melody of May ?

And why, since thousands would be proud
 Of such a favour shown,
 Am I selected from the crowd
 To witness it alone ?

Sing'st thou, sweet Philomel, to me,
 For that I also long
 Have practised in the groves like thee,
 Though not like thee in song ?

Or sing'st thou rather under force
Of some divine command,
Commissioned to presage a course
Of happier days at hand ?

Thrice welcome then ! for many a long
And joyless year have I,
As thou to-day, put forth my song
Beneath a wintry sky.

But thee no wintry skies can harm,
Who only need'st to sing
To make even January charm,
And every season Spring.

TO A YOUNG LADY WHO STOLE A PEN FROM THE PRINCE OF
WALES' STANDISH

SWEET Nymph, who art, it seems, accused
Of stealing George's pen,
Use it thyself, and having used
E'en give it him again.

The plume of his that has one scrap
Of thy good sense expressed
Will be a feather in his cap
Worth more than all his *crest*.

LINES

WRITTEN FOR INSERTION IN A COLLECTION OF HANDWRITINGS AND
SIGNATURES, MADE BY MISS PATTY, SISTER OF HANNAH MORE

In vain to live from age to age
While modern bards endeavour,
I write my name in Patty's page,
And gain my point for ever.

W. COWPER.

EPITAPH ON A FREE BUT TAME REDBREAST

A FAVOURITE OF MISS SALLY HURDIS

THESE are not dew-drops, these are tears,
 And tears by Sally shed
 For absent Robin, who she fears,
 With too much cause, is dead.

One morn he came not to her hand
 As he was wont to come
 And, on her finger perched, to stand
 Picking his breakfast-crumb.

Alarmed she called him and perplext
 She sought him, but in vain ;
 That day he came not, nor the next,
 Nor ever came again.

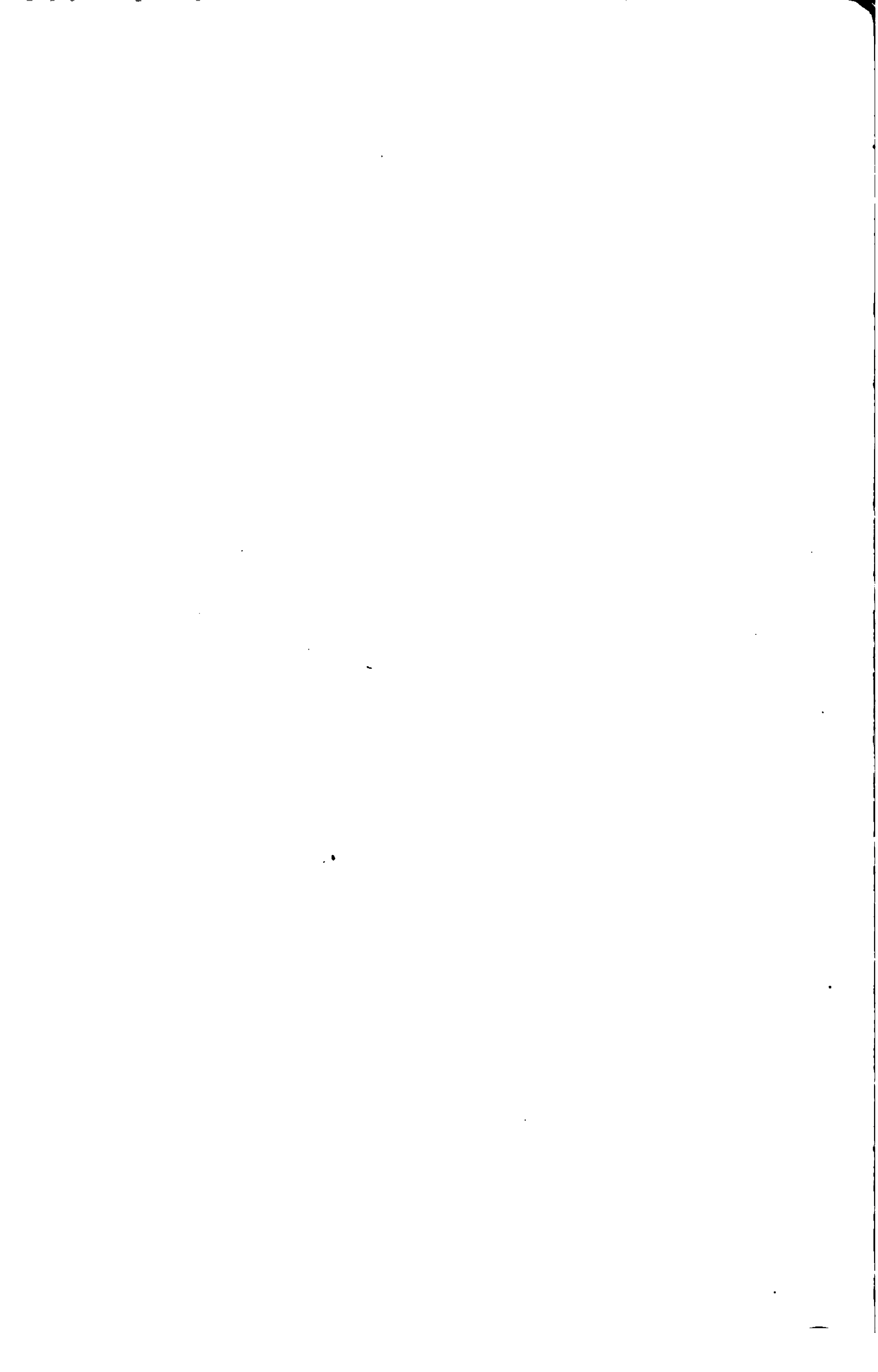
She therefore raised him here a tomb,
 Though where he fell or how
 None knows, so secret was his doom,
 Nor where he moulders now.

Had half a score of coxcombs died
 In social Robin's stead,
 Poor Sally's tears had soon been dried,
 Or haply never shed.

But Bob was neither rudely bold
 Nor spiritlessly tame,
 Nor was, like theirs, his bosom cold,
 But always in a flame.

To SIR JOHN FENN

Two omens seem propitious to my fame,
 Your spouse embalms my verse, and you my name ;
 A name, which, all self-flattery far apart,
 Belongs to one who venerates in his heart
 The wise and good, and therefore, of the few
 Known by those titles, sir, both yours and you.



WARREN HASTINGS

FROM THE PAINTING BY SIR THOMAS LAWRENCE IN THE NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

ON A MISTAKE IN HIS TRANSLATION OF HOMER

COWPER had sinned with some excuse,
If, bound in rhyming tethers,
He had committed this abuse
Of changing ewes for wethers.

But male for female is a trope,
Or rather bold misnomer,
That would have startled even Pope
When he translated Homer.

TO WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, Esq.

THY country, Wilberforce, with just disdain,
Hears thee by cruel men and impious called
Fanatic, for thy zeal to loose the enthralled
From exile, public sale, and slavery's chain.
Friend of the poor, the wronged, the fetter-galled,
Fear not lest labour such as thine be vain !
Thou hast achieved a part ; hast gained the ear
Of Britain's senate to thy glorious cause.
Hope smiles, joy springs, and, though cold caution pause
And weave delay, the better hour is near
That shall remunerate thy toils severe
By peace for Afric, fenced with British laws.
Enjoy what thou hast won, esteem and love
From all the just on earth and all the blest above.

TO WARREN HASTINGS, Esq.

BY AN OLD SCHOOLFELLOW OF HIS AT WESTMINSTER

HASTINGS ! I knew thee young, and of a mind,
While young, humane, conversable, and kind ;
Nor can I well believe thee, gentle then,
Now grown a villain and the worst of men ;
But rather some suspect who have oppressed
And worried thee, as not themselves the best.

TO DR. AUSTEN, OF CECIL STREET, LONDON

AUSTEN ! accept a grateful verse from me,
 The poet's treasure, no inglorious fee.
 Loved by the Muses, thy ingenuous mind
 Pleasing requital in a verse may find ;
 Verse oft has dashed the scythe of time aside,
 Immortalizing names which else had died.
 And oh ! could I command the glittering wealth
 With which sick kings are glad to purchase health,
 Yet, if extensive fame, and sure to live,
 Were in the power of verse like mine to give,
 I would not recompense his heart with less,
 Who, giving Mary health, heals my distress.
 Friend of my friend ! I love thee, though unknown,
 And boldly call thee, being his, my own.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esq.

HAYLEY, thy tenderness fraternal, shown
 In our first interview, delightful guest !
 To Mary, and me for her dear sake distressed,
 Such as it is has made my heart thy own,
 Though heedless now of new engagements grown ;
 For threescore winters make a wintry breast,
 And I had purposed ne'er to go in quest
 Of friendship more, except with God alone.
 But thou hast won me : nor is God my foe,
 Who, ere this last afflictive scene began,
 Sent thee to mitigate the dreadful blow,
 My brother, by whose sympathy I know
 Thy true deserts infallibly to scan,
 Not more to admire the bard than love the man.

LINES ADDRESSED TO DR. DARWIN

AUTHOR OF "THE BOTANIC GARDEN"

Two Poets, (poets, by report,
 Not oft so well agree)
 Sweet Harmonist of Flora's court !
 Conspire to honour thee.

WILLIAM HAYLEY

**FROM AN ENGRAVING BY H. ROBINSON AFTER A DRAWING BY W. HAYLEY OF THE
ORIGINAL PORTRAIT BY GEORGE ROONEY**

1000

They best can judge a poet's worth
 Who oft themselves have known
 The pangs of a poetic birth
 By labours of their own.

We therefore, pleased, extol thy song,
 Though various, yet complete,
 Rich in embellishment, as strong
 And learned as 'tis sweet.

No envy mingles with our praise,
 Though, could our hearts repine
 At any poet's happier lays,
 They would,—they must, at thine

But we, in mutual bondage knit
 Of friendship's closest tie,
 Can gaze on even Darwin's wit
 With an unjaundiced eye ;

And deem the bard, whoe'er he be,
 And howsoever known,
 Who would not twine a wreath for thee,
 Unworthy of his own.

ON HIS APPROACHING VISIT TO HAYLEY

THROUGH floods and flames to your retreat
 I win my desperate way,
 And when we meet, if e'er we meet,
 Will echo your huzza.

AN EPITAPH

HERE lies one who never drew
 Blood himself, yet many slew ;
 Gave the gun its aim, and figure
 Made in field, yet ne'er pulled trigger.
 Armed men have gladly made
 Him their guide, and him obeyed ;
 At his signified desire
 Would advance, present, and fire.
 Stout he was, and large of limb,
 Scores have fled at sight of him ;

And to all this fame he rose
 Only following his nose.
 Neptune was he called; not he
 Who controls the boisterous sea,
 But of happier command,
 Neptune of the furrowed land;
 And, your wonder vain to shorten,
Pointer to Sir John Throckmorton.

EPITAPH ON "FOP"

A DOG BELONGING TO LADY THROCKMORTON

THOUGH once a puppy, and though Fop by name,
 Here moulders one whose bones some honour claim;
 No sycophant, although of spaniel race,
 And, though no hound, a martyr to the chase.
 Ye squirrels, rabbits, leverets, rejoice!
 Your haunts no longer echo to his voice;
 This record of his fate exulting view,
 He died worn out with vain pursuit of you.
 "Yes"—the indignant shade of Fop replies—
 "And worn with vain pursuit man also dies."

TO GEORGE ROMNEY, ESQ.

ON HIS PICTURE OF ME IN CRAYONS, DRAWN AT EARTHAM IN THE SIXTY-
 FIRST YEAR OF MY AGE, AND IN THE MONTHS OF AUGUST AND
 SEPTEMBER, 1792

ROMNEY, expert infallibly to trace
 On chart or canvas not the form alone
 And semblance, but, however faintly shown,
 The mind's impression too on every face,
 With strokes that time ought never to erase;
 Thou hast so pencilled mine that, though I own
 The subject worthless, I have never known
 The artist shining with superior grace.
 Yet this I mark,—that symptoms none of woe
 In thy incomparable work appear.
 Well; I am satisfied it should be so,
 Since, on maturer thought, the cause is clear;
 For in my looks what sorrow couldst thou see
 While I was Hayley's guest, and sat to thee?

ON RECEIVING HAYLEY'S PICTURE

IN language warm as could be breathed or penned
 Thy picture speaks the original my friend ;
 Not by those looks that indicate thy mind,
 They only speak thee friend of all mankind :
 Expression here more soothing still I see,
 That friend of *all* a partial friend to *me*.

TO HIS COUSIN, LADY HESKETH

REASONS WHY HE COULD NOT WRITE HER A GOOD LETTER

My pens are all split, and my ink-glass is dry ;
 Neither wit, common sense, nor ideas, have I.

EPITAPH ON MR. CHESTER, OF CHICHELY

TEARS flow, and cease not, where the good man lies,
 Till all who knew him follow to the skies.
 Tears therefore fall where CHESTER's ashes sleep ;
 Him wife, friends, brothers, children, servants, weep ;
 And justly—few shall ever him transcend
 As husband, parent, brother, master, friend.

ON A PLANT OF VIRGIN'S BOWER

DESIGNED TO COVER A GARDEN-SEAT

THRIVE, gentle plant ! and weave a bower
 For Mary and for me,
 And deck with many a splendid flower
 Thy foliage large and free.

Thou camest from Eartham, and wilt shade
 (If truly I divine)
 Some future day the illustrious head
 Of him who made thee mine.

WILLIAM COWPER

Should Daphne show a jealous frown,
 And Envy seize the bay,
 Affirming none so fit to crown
 Such honoured brows as they,

Thy cause with zeal we shall defend,
 And with convincing power ;
 For why should not the Virgin's Friend
 Be crowned with Virgin's Bower ?

TO MY COUSIN, ANNE BODHAM

ON RECEIVING FROM HER A NETWORK PURSE MADE BY HERSELF

My gentle Anne, whom heretofore,
 When I was young, and thou no more
 Than plaything for a nurse,
 I danced and fondled on my knee,
 A kitten both in size and glee,—
 I thank thee for my purse.

Gold pays the worth of all things here ;
 But not of love !—that gem's too dear
 For richest rogues to win it :
 I therefore, as a proof of love,
 Esteem thy present far above
 The best things kept within it.

INSCRIPTION

FOR A HERMITAGE IN THE AUTHOR'S GARDEN

THIS cabin, Mary, in my sight appears,
 Built as it has been in our waning years,
 A rest afforded to our weary feet,
 Preliminary to—the last retreat.

TO MRS. UNWIN

MARY ! I want a lyre with other strings,
 Such aid from Heaven as some have feigned they drew,
 An eloquence scarce given to mortals, new
 And undebased by praise of meaner things,

MRS. BODHAM

FROM THE ORIGINAL PORTRAIT BY ABBOTT



That, ere through age or woe I shed my wings,
 I may record thy worth with honour due
 In verse as musical as thou art true,
 And that immortalizes whom it sings.
 But thou hast little need. There is a book
 By seraphs writ with beams of heavenly light,
 On which the eyes of God not rarely look,
 A chronicle of actions just and bright :
 There all thy deeds, my faithful Mary, shine,
 And, since thou own'st that praise, I spare thee mine.

TO JOHN JOHNSON

ON HIS PRESENTING ME WITH AN ANTIQUE BUST OF HOMER

KINSMAN beloved, and as a son, by me !
 When I behold this fruit of thy regard,
 The sculptured form of my old favourite bard,
 I reverence feel for him and love for thee.
 Joy too, and grief. Much joy that there should be
 Wise men and learned who grudge not to reward
 With some applause my bold attempt and hard
 Which others scorn ; critics by courtesy.
 The grief is this, that sunk in Homer's mine
 I lose my precious years, now soon to fail,
 Handling his gold, which, howsoe'er it shine,
 Proves dross when balanced in the Christian scale.
 Be wiser thou !—like our forefather *DONNE*,
 Seek heavenly wealth, and work for God alone.

INSCRIPTION FOR THE SAME BUST

*Εἰκόνα τίς ταύτην ; κλυτὸν ἀνέρος οὐνομ' ὕλαλεν.
 Οὐνομα δ' οὗτος ἀνὴρ ἀφθιτον αἶεν ἔχει.*

TRANSLATION BY THE AUTHOR

THE Sculptor ?—Nameless, though once dear to fame.
 But this man bears an everlasting name.

TO A YOUNG FRIEND

ON HIS ARRIVING AT CAMBRIDGE WET WHEN NO RAIN HAD
FALLEN THERE

If Gideon's fleece, which drenched with dew he found
While moisture none refreshed the herbs around,
Might fitly represent the Church endowed
With heavenly gifts to heathens not allowed ;
In pledge, perhaps, of favours from on high,
Thy locks were wet when others' locks were dry.
Heaven grant us half the omen,—may we see
Not drought on others, but much dew on thee !

ON A PORTRAIT OF HIMSELF

(IN A LETTER TO HAYLEY)

ABBOT is painting me so true
That (trust me) you would stare,
And hardly know at the first view
If I were here or there.

THANKS FOR A PRESENT OF PHEASANTS

IN Copeman's ear this truth let Echo tell,—
“Immortal bards like mortal pheasants well ;”
And when his clerkship's out I wish him herds
Of golden clients for his golden birds.

A TALE.*

IN Scotland's realm, where trees are few,
Nor even shrubs abound ;
But where, however bleak the view,
Some better things are found ;

* This tale is founded on an article of intelligence which the author found in the
“Buckinghamshire Herald,” for Saturday, June 1, 1793, in the following words :—

“Glasgow, May 23.

“In a block, or pulley, near the head of the mast of a gabert, now lying at the Broomielaw, there is a chaffinch's nest and four eggs. The nest was built while the vessel lay at Greenock, and was followed hither by both birds. Though the block is occasionally lowered for the inspection of the curious, the birds have not forsaken the nest. The cock, however, visits the nest but seldom ; while the hen never leaves it but when she descends to the hull for food.”

For husband there and wife may boast
Their union undefiled,
And false ones are as rare almost
As hedge-rows in the wild :

In Scotland's realm forlorn and bare
This history chanced of late,—
The history of a wedded pair,
A chaffinch and his mate.

The spring drew near, each felt a breast
With genial instinct filled ;
They paired, and would have built a nest,
But found not where to build.

The heaths uncovered and the moors
Except with snow and sleet,
Sea-beaten rocks and naked shores,
Could yield them no retreat.

Long time a breeding-place they sought
Till both grew vexed and tired ;
At length a ship arriving brought
The good so long desired.

A ship !—could such a restless thing
Afford them place of rest ?
Or was the merchant charged to bring
The homeless birds a nest ?

Hush !—silent hearers profit most,—
This racer of the sea
Proved kinder to them than the coast,
It served them with a tree.

But such a tree ! 'twas shaven deal,
The tree they call a mast,
And had a hollow with a wheel
Through which the tackle passed.

Within that cavity aloft
Their roofless home they fixed,
Form'd with materials neat and soft,
Bents, wool, and feathers mixed.

Four ivory eggs soon pave its floor,
With russet specks bedight ;
The vessel weighs, forsakes the shore,
And lessens to the sight.

The mother-bird is gone to sea
As she had changed her kind ;
But goes the male ? Far wiser he
Is doubtless left behind.

No ; soon as from ashore he saw
The wingèd mansion move
He flew to reach it, by a law
Of never-failing love.

Then perching at his consort's side
Was briskly borne along,
The billows and the blast defied,
And cheered her with a song.

The seaman with sincere delight
His feathered shipmates eyes,
Scarce less exulting in the sight
Than when he tows a prize.

For seamen much believe in signs,
And from a chance so new
Each some approaching good divines,—
And may his hopes be true !

Hail, honoured land ! a desert where
Not even birds can hide,
Yet parent of this loving pair
Whom nothing could divide.

And ye who, rather than resign
Your matrimonial plan,
Were not afraid to plough the brine
In company with man ;

For whose lean country much disdain
We English often show,
Yet from a richer nothing gain
But wantonness and woe ;

Be it your fortune, year by year,
The same resource to prove,
And may ye, sometimes landing here,
Instruct us how to love !

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esq.

DEAR architect of fine CHATEAUX in air,
Worthier to stand for ever, if they could,
Than any built of stone, or yet of wood,
For back of royal elephant to bear;
Oh for permission from the skies to share,
Much to my own, though little to thy good,
With thee (not subject to the jealous mood !)
A partnership of literary ware !
But I am bankrupt now ; and doomed henceforth
To drudge, in descant dry, on others' lays ;
Bards, I acknowledge, of unequalled worth :
But what is commentator's happiest praise ?
That he has furnished lights for other eyes,
Which they who need them use, and then despise.

ON A SPANIEL, CALLED "BEAU,"

KILLING A YOUNG BIRD

A SPANIEL, Beau, that fares like you,
Well fed, and at his ease,
Should wiser be than to pursue
Each trifle that he sees.

But you have killed a tiny bird
Which flew not till to-day,
Against my orders, whom you heard
Forbidding you the prey.

Nor did you kill that you might eat
And ease a doggish pain ;
For him, though chased with furious heat,
You left where he was slain.

Nor was he of the thievish sort,
Or one whom blood allures,
But innocent was all his sport
Whom you have torn for yours.

My dog ! what remedy remains,
 Since, teach you all I can,
 I see you, after all my pains,
 So much resemble man ?

BEAU'S REPLY

SIR, when I flew to seize the bird
 In spite of your command,
 A louder voice than yours I heard,
 And harder to withstand.

You cried " Forbear ! "—but in my breast
 A mightier cried " Proceed ! "—
 'Twas nature, sir, whose strong behest
 Impelled me to the deed.

Yet much as nature I respect
 I ventured once to break
 (As you perhaps may recollect)
 Her precept for your sake ;

And when your linnet on a day,
 Passing his prison door,
 Had fluttered all his strength away
 And panting pressed the floor,

Well knowing him a sacred thing
 Not destined to my tooth,
 I only kissed his ruffled wing
 And licked the feathers smooth.

Let my obedience then excuse
 My disobedience now,
 Nor some reproof yourself refuse
 From your aggrieved Bow-wow ;

If killing birds be such a crime
 (Which I can hardly see),
 What think you, sir, of killing Time
 With verse addressed to me ?

ANSWER TO STANZAS ADDRESSED TO LADY HESKETH

BY MISS CATHARINE FANSHAWE, WHO, WHEN FORBIDDEN TO TAKE A
COPY OF A POEM BY COWPER, HAD LEARNT IT BY HEART

To be remembered *thus* is fame,
And in the first degree ;
And did the *few like her* the same,
The press might sleep for me.

So Homer, in the memory stored
Of many a Grecian belle,
Was once preserved—a richer hoard,
But never lodged so well.

TO A LADY WHO WORE A LOCK OF HIS HAIR SET WITH DIAMONDS.

THE star that beams on Anna's breast
Conceals her William's hair ;
'Twas lately severed from the rest
To be promoted there.

The heart that beats beneath that breast
Is William's well I know,
A nobler prize and richer far
Than India could bestow.

She thus his favoured lock prefers
To make her William shine ;
The ornament indeed is hers,
But all the honour mine.

ON A LETTER OF MISS FANSHAWE

HER pen drops eloquence as sweet
As any Muse's tongue can speak ;
Nor need a scribe like her regret
Her want of Latin or of Greek.

TO THE SPANISH ADMIRAL COUNT GRAVINA

ON HIS TRANSLATING THE AUTHOR'S SONG ON A ROSE INTO ITALIAN
VERSE

My rose, Gravina, blooms anew ;
And, steeped not now in rain
But in Castalian streams by you,
Will never fade again.

ON FLAXMAN'S PENELOPE

THE suitors sinned, but with a fair excuse,
Whom all this elegance might well seduce ;
Nor can our censure on the husband fall
Who, for a wife so lovely, slew them all.

ON RECEIVING HEYNE'S VIRGIL FROM MR. HAYLEY

I SHOULD have deemed it once an effort vain
To sweeten more sweet Maro's matchless strain,
But from that error now behold me free,
Since I received him as a gift from thee.

IN A TIME OF GREAT HEAT

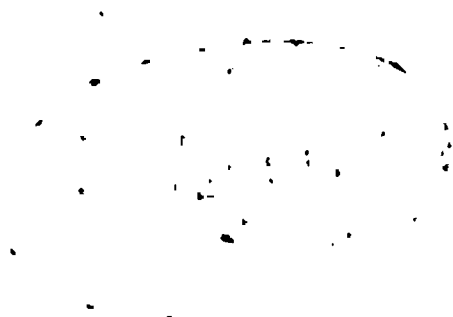
TO HAYLEY

AH ! brother Poet, send me of your shade,
And bid the zephyrs hasten to my aid !
Or, like a worm unearthed at noon, I go,
Despatched by sunshine, to the shades below.

EPIGRAMS ON HIS GARDEN-SHED

I

BEWARE of building ! I intended
Rough logs and thatch,—and thus it ended.



M. J. 1. 1.

MRS. UNWIN

FROM AN ENGRAVING BY H. ROBINSON AFTER A DRAWING BY W. HARVEY OF THE
ORIGINAL BY DEVIS

II

Instead of a pound or two spending a mint
Must serve me at least, I believe, with a hint
That, building and building, a man may be driven
At last out of doors, and have no house to live in.

TO MARY

THE twentieth year is well-nigh past
Since first our sky was overcast ;
Ah, would that this might be the last,
My Mary !

Thy spirits have a fainter flow,
I see thee daily weaker grow ;
'Twas my distress that brought thee low,
My Mary !

Thy needles, once a shining store,
For my sake restless heretofore,
Now rust disused and shine no more,
My Mary !

For though thou gladly wouldst fulfil
The same kind office for me still,
Thy sight now seconds not thy will,
My Mary !

But well thou playedst the housewife's part,
And all thy threads with magic art
Have wound themselves about this heart,
My Mary !

Thy indistinct expressions seem
Like language uttered in a dream ;
Yet me they charm, whate'er the theme,
My Mary !

Thy silver locks, once auburn bright,
Are still more lovely in my sight
Than golden beams of orient light,
My Mary !

For, could I view nor them nor thee,
What sight worth seeing could I see ?
The sun would rise in vain for me,
My Mary !

Partakers of the sad decline,
 Thy hands their little force resign :
 Yet, gently prest, press gently mine,
My Mary !

And then I feel that still I hold
 A richer store ten thousandfold
 Than misers fancy in their gold,
My Mary !

Such feebleness of limbs thou provest,
 That now at every step thou movest
 Upheld by two, yet still thou lovest,
My Mary !

And still to love, though prest with ill,
 In wintry age to feel no chill,
 With me is to be lovely still,
My Mary !

But ah ! by constant heed I know,
 How oft the sadness that I show
 Transforms thy smiles to looks of woe,
My Mary !

And should my future lot be cast
 With much resemblance of the past,
 Thy worn-out heart will break at last,
My Mary !

MONTES GLACIALES

IN OCEANO GERMANICO NATANTES

EN, quæ prodigia, ex oris allata reinotis,
 Oras adveniunt pavefacta per æquora nostras !
 Non equidem priscae sæclum rediisse videtur
 Pyrrhæ, cum Proteus pecus altos visere montes
 Et sylvas, egit, sed tempora vix leviora
 Adsunt, evulsi quando radicitus alti
 In mare descendunt montes, fluctusque perevrant.
 Quid vero hoc monstri est magis et mirabile visu ?
 Splendentes video, ceu pulchro ex ære vel auro
 Conflatos, rutilisque accinctos undique gemmis,
 Baccâ cæruleâ, et flammâ imitante pyropo.

Ex oriente adsunt, ubi gazas optima tellus
Parturit omnigenas, quibus æva per omnia sumptu
Ingenti finxere sibi diademata reges ?
Vix hoc crediderim. Non fallunt talia acutos
Mercatorum oculos : prius et quàm littora Gangis
Liquissent, avidis gratissima præda fuissent.
Ortos unde putemus ? An illos Ves'vius atrox
Protulit, ignivomisve ejecit faucibus Ætna ?
Luce micant propriâ, Phœbive, per aëra purum
Nunc stimulantis equos, argentea tela retorquent ?
Phœbi luce micant. Ventis et fluctibus altis
Appulsi, et rapidis subter currentibus undis,
Tandem non fallunt oculos. Capita alta videre est
Multâ onerata nive et canis conspersa pruinis.
Cætera sunt glacies. Procul hinc, ubi Bruma ferè omnes
Contristat menses, portenta hæc horrida nobis
Illa strui voluit. Quoties de culmine summo
Clivorum fluèrent in littora prona solutæ
Sole nives, propero tendentes in mare cursu,
Illa gelu fixit. Paulatim attollere sese
Mirum cœpit opus ; glacieque ab origine rerum
In glaciem aggestâ sublimes vertice tandem
Æquavit montes non crescere nescia moles.
Sic immensa diu stetit æternumque stetisset
Congeries, hominum neque vi neque mobilis arte,
Littora ni tandem declivia deseruisset,
Pondere victa suo. Dilabitur. Omnia circum
Antra et saxa gemunt, subito concussa fragore,
Dum ruit in pelagum, tanquam studiosa natandi,
Ingens tota strues. Sic Delos dicitur olim,
Insula, in Ægæo fluitâsse erratica ponto.
Sed non ex glacie Delos ; neque torpida Delum
Bruma inter rupes genuit nudum sterilemque ;
Sed vestita herbis erat illa, ornataque nunquam
Deciduâ lauro ; et Delum dilexit Apollo. At
Vos, erroneos horrendi, et caligine digni
Cimmeriâ, Deus idem odit. Natalia vestra,
Nubibus involvens frontem, non ille tueri
Sustinuit. Patrium vos ergo requirite cælum !
Ite ! Redite ! Timete moras ; ni leniter austro
Spirante, et nitidas Phœbo jaculante sagittas
Hostili vobis, pereatis gurgite misti !

ON THE ICE ISLANDS

SEEN FLOATING IN THE GERMAN OCEAN

WHAT portents, from what distant region, ride,
Unseen till now in ours, the astonished tide?
In ages past, old Proteus, with his droves
Of sea-calves, sought the mountains and the groves;
But now, descending whence of late they stood,
Themselves the mountains seem to rove the flood;
Dire times were they full-charged with human woes;
And these scarce less calamitous than those.
What view we now? More wondrous still! Behold!
Like burnished brass they shine, or beaten gold;
And all around the pearl's pure splendour show,
And all around the ruby's fiery glow.
Come they from India, where the burning earth,
All bounteous, gives her richest treasures birth;
And where the costly gems that beam around
The brows of mightiest potentates are found?
No. Never such a countless dazzling store
Had left, unseen, the Ganges' peopled shore;
Rapacious hands and ever-watchful eyes
Should sooner far have marked and seized the prize.
Whence sprang they then? Ejected have they come
From Ves'vius', or from Ætna's burning womb?
Thus shine they self-illumed, or but display
The borrowed splendours of a cloudless day?
With borrowed beams they shine. The gales, that breathe
Now landward, and the current's force beneath,
Have borne them nearer; and the nearer sight,
Advantaged more, contemplates them aright.
Their lofty summits crested high they show
With mingled sleet, and long-incumbent snow:
The rest is ice. Far hence, where, most severe,
Bleak Winter well-nigh saddens all the year,
Their infant growth began. He bade arise
Their uncouth forms, portentous in our eyes.
Oft as, dissolved by transient suns, the snow
Left the tall cliff to join the flood below,
He caught and curdled with a freezing blast
The current, ere it reached the boundless waste.
By slow degrees uprose the wondrous pile,
And long successive ages rolled the while,
Till, ceaseless in its growth, it claimed to stand
Tall as its rival mountains on the land.

Thus stood, and, unremovable by skill
Or force of man, had stood the structure still ;
But that, though firmly fixed, supplanted yet
By pressure of its own enormous weight,
It left the shelving beach,—and with a sound
That shook the bellowing waves and rocks around,
Self-launched, and swiftly, to the briny wave,
As if instinct with strong desire to lave,
Down went the ponderous mass. So bards of old
How Delos swam the Ægean deep have told.
But not of ice was Delos. Delos bore
Herb, fruit, and flower. She, crowned with laurel, wore,
Even under wintry skies, a summer smile ;
And Delos was Apollo's favourite isle.
But, horrid wanderers of the deep, to you
He deems Cimmerian darkness only due.
Your hated birth he deigned not to survey,
But, scornful, turned his glorious eyes away.
Hence ! Seek your home, nor longer rashly dare
The darts of Phœbus, and a softer air ;
Lest ye regret, too late, your native coast,
In no congenial gulf for ever lost !

THE CASTAWAY

OBSCUREST night involved the sky,
The Atlantic billows roared,
When such a destined wretch as I,
Washed headlong from on board,
Of friends, of hope, of all bereft,
His floating home for ever left.

No braver chief could Albion boast
Than he with whom he went,
Nor ever ship left Albion's coast
With warmer wishes sent.
He loved them both, but both in vain,
Nor him beheld, nor her again.

Not long beneath the whelming brine,
Expert to swim, he lay ;
Nor soon he felt his strength decline,
Or courage die away ;
But waged with death a lasting strife,
Supported by despair of life.

He shouted : nor his friends had failed
 To check the vessel's course,
 But so the furious blast prevailed
 That, pitiless perforce,
 They left their outcast mate behind,
 And scudded still before the wind.

Some succour yet they could afford ;
 And such as storms allow,
 The cask, the coop, the floated cord,
 Delayed not to bestow.
 But he (they knew) nor ship nor shore,
 Whate'er they gave, should visit more.

Nor, cruel as it seemed, could he
 Their haste himself condemn,
 Aware that flight, in such a sea,
 Alone could rescue them ;
 Yet bitter felt it still to die
 Deserted, and his friends so nigh.

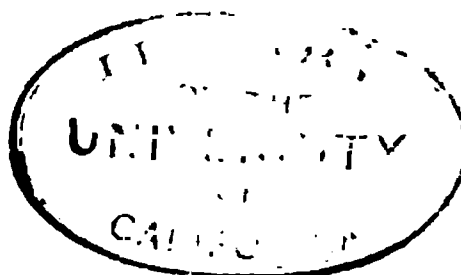
He long survives, who lives an hour
 In ocean, self-upheld ;
 And so long he, with unspent power,
 His destiny repelled ;
 And ever, as the minutes flew,
 Entreated help, or cried " Adieu ! "

At length, his transient respite past,
 His comrades, who before
 Had heard his voice in every blast,
 Could catch the sound no more :
 For then, by toil subdued, he drank
 The stifling wave, and then he sank.

No poet wept him ; but the page
 Of narrative sincere,
 That tells his name, his worth, his age,
 Is wet with Anson's tear :
 And tears by bards or heroes shed
 Alike immortalize the dead.

I therefore purpose not, or dream,
 Descanting on his fate,
 To give the melancholy theme
 A more enduring date :
 But misery still delights to trace
 Its semblance in another's case.

No voice divine the storm allayed,
No light propitious shone,
When, snatched from all effectual aid,
We perished, each alone :
But I beneath a rougher sea,
And whelmed in deeper gulfs than he.



TRANSLATIONS

TRANSLATIONS FROM THE FRENCH OF MADAME DE LA MOTHE GUYON

THE NATIVITY

'**T**IS folly all !—let me not more be told
Of Parian porticoes and roofs of gold :
Delightful views of nature dressed by art
Enchant no longer this indifferent heart :
The Lord of all things, in his humble birth,
Makes mean the proud magnificence of earth ;
The straw, the manger, and the mouldering wall,
Eclipse its lustre ; and I scorn it all.

Canals, and fountains, and delicious vales,
Green slopes, and plains whose plenty never fails, 10
Deep-rooted groves, whose heads sublimely rise,
Earth-born, and yet ambitious of the skies :
The abundant foliage of whose gloomy shades
Vainly the sun in all its power invades :
Where warbled airs of sprightly birds resound,
Whose verdure lives while winter scowls around ;
Rocks, lofty mountains, caverns dark and deep,
And torrents raving down the rugged steep ;
Smooth downs whose fragrant herbs the spirits cheer ;
Meads crowned with flowers ; streams musical and clear, 20
Whose silver waters and whose murmurs join
Their artless charms to make the scene divine ;
The fruitful vineyard, and the furrowed plain
That seems a rolling sea of golden grain ;
All, all have lost the charms they once possessed,
An infant God reigns sovereign in my breast ;
From Bethlehem's bosom I no more will rove,
There dwells the Saviour, and there rests my love.

Ye mightier rivers, that with sounding force
Urge down the valleys your impetuous course !

Winds, clouds, and lightnings ! and, ye waves, whose heads,
 Curled into monstrous forms, the seaman dreads !
 Horrid abyss, where all experience fails,
 Spread with the wreck of planks and shattered sails ;
 On whose broad back grim Death triumphant rides,
 While havoc floats on all thy swelling tides,
 Thy shores a scene of ruin, strewed around
 With vessels bulged, and bodies of the drowned !

Ye fish, that sport beneath the boundless waves,
 And rest, secure from man, in rocky caves ; 40
 Swift-darting sharks, and whales of hideous size,
 Whom all the aquatic world with terror eyes !
 Had I but Faith immovable and true,
 I might defy the fiercest storm, like you.
 The world, a more disturbed and boisterous sea,
 When Jesus shows a smile, affrights not me ;
 He hides me, and in vain the billows roar,
 Break harmless at my feet, and leave the shore.

Thou azure vault, where through the gloom of night,
 Thick sown, we see such countless worlds of light ! 50
 Thou moon, whose car, encompassing the skies,
 Restores lost nature to our wondering eyes,
 Again retiring when the brighter sun
 Begins the course he seems in haste to run !
 Behold him where he shines ! His rapid rays,
 Themselves unmeasured, measure all our days ;
 Nothing impedes the race he would pursue,
 Nothing escapes his penetrating view,
 A thousand lands confess his quickening heat,
 And all he cheers are fruitful, fair, and sweet. 60

Far from enjoying what these scenes disclose,
 I feel the thorn, alas ! but miss the rose :
 Too well I know this aching heart requires
 More solid good to fill its vast desires ;
 In vain they represent His matchless might,
 Who called them out of deep primeval night ;
 Their form and beauty but augment my woe :
 I seek the Giver of those charms they show :
 Nor, him beside, throughout the world he made,
 Lives there in whom I trust for cure or aid. 70

Infinite God, thou great unrivalled ONE !
 Whose glory makes a blot of yonder sun :
 Compared with thine, how dim his beauty seems,
 How quenched the radiance of his golden beams !
 Thou art my bliss, the light by which I move ;
 In thee alone dwells all that I can love ;
 All darkness flies when thou art pleased to appear,

A sudden spring renews the fading year ;
 Where'er I turn I see thy power and grace,
 The watchful guardian of our heedless race ; 80
 Thy various creatures in one strain agree,
 All, in all times and places, speak of thee ;
 Even I, with trembling heart and stammering tongue,
 Attempt thy praise, and join the general song.

Almighty Former of this wondrous plan,
 Faintly reflected in thine image, Man,—
 Holy and just,—the greatness of whose name
 Fills and supports this universal frame,
 Diffused throughout the infinitude of space,
 Who art thyself thine own vast dwelling-place ; 90
 Soul of our soul, whom yet no sense of ours
 Discerns, eluding our most active powers ;
 Encircling shades attend thine awful throne,
 That veil thy face and keep thee still unknown ;
 Unknown, though dwelling in our inmost part,
 Lord of the thoughts, and Sovereign of the heart !

Repeat the charming truth that never tires,
 No God is like the God my soul desires !
 He at whose voice heaven trembles, even he,
 Great as he is, knows how to stoop to me. 100
 Lo ! there he lies ;—that smiling Infant said,
 “ Heaven, earth, and sea exist ! ”—and they obeyed.
 Even he whose Being swells beyond the skies
 Is born of woman, lives, and mourns, and dies ;
 Eternal and Immortal, seems to cast
 That glory from his brows, and breathes his last.
 Trivial and vain the works that man has wrought,
 How do they shrink and vanish at the thought !

Sweet solitude, and scene of my repose !
 This rustic sight assuages all my woes.— 110
 That crib contains the Lord whom I adore ;
 And earth's a shade that I pursue no more.
 He is my firm support, my rock, my tower,
 I dwell secure beneath his sheltering power,
 And hold this mean retreat for ever dear,
 For all I love, my soul's delight, is here.
 I see the Almighty swathed in infant bands,
 Tied helpless down the Thunder-bearer's hands,
 And in this shed that mystery discern
 Which faith and love, and they alone, can learn. 120

Ye tempests, spare the slumbers of your Lord !
 Ye zephyrs, all your whispered sweets afford !
 Confess the God that guides the rolling year ;
 Heaven, do him homage ; and thou, Earth, revere !

Ye shepherds, monarchs, sages, hither bring
 Your hearts an offering, and adore your King !
 Pure be those hearts, and rich in Faith and Love ;
 Join in his praise the harmonious worlds above ;
 To Bethlehem haste, rejoice in his repose,
 And praise him there for all that he bestows !

130

Man, busy Man, alas ! can ill afford
 To obey the summons and attend the Lord ;
 Perverted reason revels and runs wild,
 By glittering shows of pomp and wealth beguiled ;
 And, blind to genuine excellence and grace,
 Finds not her Author in so mean a place.

Ye unbelieving ! learn a wiser part,
 Distrust your erring sense, and search your heart ;
 There, soon ye shall perceive a kindling flame
 Glow for that infant God from whom it came ;
 Resist not, quench not, that divine desire,
 Melt all your adamant in heavenly fire !

140

Not so will I requite thee, gentle Love !
 Yielding and soft this heart shall ever prove ;
 And every heart beneath thy power should fall,
 Glad to submit, could mine contain them all.

But I am poor ; oblation I have none,
 None for a Saviour, but Himself alone ;
 Whate'er I render thee, from thee it came ;
 And if I give my body to the flame,

150

My patience, love, and energy divine
 Of heart, and soul, and spirit, all are thine.
 Ah, vain attempt to expunge the mighty score !
 The more I pay I owe thee still the more.

Upon my meanness, poverty, and guilt
 The trophy of thy glory shall be built ;
 Myself disdained shall be the unshaken base,
 And my deformity its fairest grace ;
 For destitute of good and rich in ill
 Must be my state and my description still.

160

And do I grieve at such an humbling lot ?
 Nay, but I cherish and enjoy the thought.
 Vain pageantry and pomp of earth, adieu !
 I have no wish, no memory for you :
 The more I feel my misery I adore
 The sacred Inmate of my soul the more :
 Rich in his love, I feel my noblest pride
 Spring from the sense of having nought beside.

In thee I find wealth, comfort, virtue, might ;
 My wanderings prove thy wisdom infinite ;
 All that I have I give thee ; and then see

170

All contrarieties unite in thee ;
 For thou hast joined them, taking up our woe
 And pouring out thy bliss on worms below,
 By filling with thy grace and love divine
 A gulf of evil in this heart of mine.
 This is, indeed, to bid the valleys rise,
 And the hills sink,—'tis matching earth and skies !
 I feel my weakness, thank thee, and deplore
 An aching heart that throbs to thank thee more ; 180
 The more I love thee I the more reprove
 A soul so lifeless and so slow to love ;
 Till, on a deluge of thy mercy tossed,
 I plunge into that sea, and there am lost.

GOD NEITHER KNOWN NOR LOVED BY THE WORLD

YE linnets, let us try, beneath this grove,
 Which shall be loudest in our Maker's praise !
 In quest of some forlorn retreat I rove,
 For all the world is blind, and wanders from his ways.

That God alone should prop the sinking soul
 Fills them with rage against his empire now :
 I traverse earth in vain from pole to pole,
 To seek one simple heart set free from all below.

They speak of love, yet little feel its sway,
 While in their bosoms many an idol lurks ;
 Their base desires, well-satisfied, obey,
 Leave the Creator's hand, and lean upon his works.

'Tis therefore I can dwell with man no more ;
 Your fellowship, ye warblers ! suits me best :
 Pure love has lost its price, though prized of yore,
 Profaned by modern tongues, and slighted as a jest.

My God, who formed you for his praise alone,
 Beholds his purpose well fulfilled in you :
 Come, let us join the choir before his throne,
 Partaking in his praise with spirits just and true !

Yes, I will always love ; and, as I ought,
 Tune to the praise of Love my ceaseless voice ;
 Preferring Love too vast for human thought,
 In spite of erring men who cavil at my choice.

Why have I not a thousand thousand hearts,
 Lord of my soul ! that they might all be thine ?
 If thou approve,—the zeal thy smile imparts,
 How should it ever fail ! can such a fire decline ?

Love pure and holy is a deathless fire ;
 Its object heavenly, it must ever blaze :
 Eternal Love a God must needs inspire,
 When once he wins the heart and fits it for his praise.

Self-love dismissed 'tis then we live indeed ;
 In her embrace, death, only death is found ;
 Come, then, one noble effort, and succeed,
 Cast off the chain of self with which thy soul is bound.

Oh ! I would cry, that all the world might hear,
 Ye self-tormentors, love your God alone ;
 Let his unequalled excellence be dear,
 Dear to your inmost souls, and make him all your own !

They hear me not.—Alas ! how fond to rove
 In endless chase of folly's specious lure !
 'Tis here alone, beneath this shady grove,
 I taste the sweets of truth,—here only am secure.

THE SWALLOW

I AM fond of the swallow ;—I learn from her flight,
 Had I skill to improve it, a lesson of love :
 How seldom on earth do we see her alight !
 She dwells in the skies, she is ever above.

It is on the wing that she takes her repose,
 Suspended and poised in the regions of air ;
 'Tis not in our fields that her sustenance grows,
 It is winged like herself, 'tis ethereal fare.

She comes in the spring, all the summer she stays,
 And, dreading the cold, still follows the sun :—
 So, true to our Love, we should covet his rays,
 And the place where he shines not immediately shun.

Our light should be Love, and our nourishment prayer ;
It is dangerous food that we find upon earth :
The fruit of this world is beset with a snare,
In itself it is hurtful, as vile in its birth.

'Tis rarely, if ever, she settles below,
And only when building a nest for her young ;
Were it not for her brood she would never bestow
A thought upon anything filthy as dung.

Let us leave it ourselves ('tis a mortal abode)
To bask every moment in infinite Love ;
Let us fly the dark winter, and follow the road
That leads to the dayspring appearing above.

THE TRIUMPH OF HEAVENLY LOVE DESIRED

AH ! reign, wherever man is found,
My Spouse, beloved and divine !
Then I am rich and I abound
When every human heart is thine.

A thousand sorrows pierce my soul
To think that all are not thine own :
Ah ! be adored from pole to pole ;
Where is thy zeal ? arise ; be known !

All hearts are cold, in every place,
Yet earthly good with warmth pursue ;
Dissolve them with a flash of grace,
Thaw these of ice, and give us new !

A FIGURATIVE DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCEDURE OF DIVINE LOVE

IN BRINGING A SOUL TO THE POINT OF SELF-RENUNCIATION AND ABSOLUTE ACQUIESCENCE

'Twas my purpose, on a day,
To embark and sail away ;
As I climbed the vessel's side
Love was sporting in the tide ;
" Come," he said, " ascend ! make haste,
" Launch into the boundless waste."

Many mariners were there,
Having each his separate care ;
They that rowed us held their eyes
Fixed upon the starry skies ;
Others steered, or turned the sails
To receive the shifting gales.

Love, with power divine supplied,
Suddenly my courage tried ;
In a moment it was night,
Ship and skies were out of sight ;
On the briny wave I lay,
Floating rushes all my stay.

Did I with resentment burn
At this unexpected turn ?
Did I wish myself on shore,
Never to forsake it more ?
No :—" My soul," I cried, " be still !
" If I must be lost, I will."

Next he hastened to convey
Both my frail supports away ;
Seized my rushes ; bade the waves
Yawn into a thousand graves :
Down I went, and sunk as lead,
Ocean closing o'er my head.

Still, however, life was safe ;
And I saw him turn and laugh :
" Friend," he cried, " adieu ! lie low
" While the wintry storms shall blow ;
" When the spring has calmed the main,
" You shall rise and float again."

Soon I saw him, with dismay,
Spread his plumes and soar away ;
Now I mark his rapid flight,
Now he leaves my aching sight ;
He is gone whom I adore,
'Tis in vain to seek him more.

How I trembled then and feared
When my Love had disappeared !
" Wilt thou leave me thus," I cried,
" Whelmed beneath the rolling tide ? "
Vain attempt to reach his ear !
Love was gone, and would not hear.

" Ah ! return, and love me still ;
 " See me subject to thy will !
 " Frown with wrath, or smile with grace,
 " Only let me see thy face !
 " Evil I have none to fear,
 " All is good, if thou art near."

Yet he leaves me,—cruel fate !
 Leaves me in my lost estate !
 " Have I sinned ? Oh say wherein ?
 " Tell me, and forgive my sin !
 " King and Lord, whom I adore,
 " Shall I see thy face no more ?

" Be not angry ; I resign,
 " Henceforth, all my will to thine :
 " I consent that thou depart,
 " Tho' thine absence breaks my heart ;
 " Go then, and for ever too ;
 " All is right that thou wilt do."

This was just what Love intended,
 He was now no more offended ;
 Soon as I became a child
 Love returned to me and smiled ;
 Never strife shall more betide
 'Twixt the bridegroom and his bride.

A CHILD OF GOD LONGING TO SEE HIM BELOVED

THERE'S not an echo round me,
 But I am glad should learn
 How pure a fire has found me,
 The love with which I burn.
 For none attends with pleasure
 To what I would reveal ;
 They slight me out of measure,
 And laugh at all I feel.

The rocks receive less proudly
 The story of my flame ;
 When I approach, they loudly
 Reverberate His name.

I speak to them of sadness,
And comforts at a stand ;
They bid me look for gladness,
And better days at hand.

Far from all habitation,
I heard a happy sound
Big with the consolation
That I have often found :
I said, " My lot is sorrow,
" My grief has no alloy ; "
The rocks replied—" to-morrow,
" To-morrow brings thee joy."

These sweet and secret tidings
What bliss it is to hear !
For, spite of all my chidings,
My weakness and my fear,
No sooner I receive them
Than I forget my pain,
And, happy to believe them,
I love as much again.

I fly to scenes romantic
Where never men resort ;
For in an age so frantic
Impiety is sport ;
For riot and confusion
They barter things above,
Condemning, as delusion,
The joy of perfect love.

In this sequestered corner
None hears what I express ;
Delivered from the scorner,
What peace do I possess !
Beneath the boughs reclining,
Or roving o'er the wild,
live as undesigning
I And harmless as a child.

No troubles here surprise me,
I innocently play,
While Providence supplies me
And guards me all the day,
My dear and kind Defender
Preserves me safely here,
From men of pomp and splendour
Who fill a child with fear.

ASPIRATIONS OF THE SOUL AFTER GOD

My Spouse ! in whose presence I live,
 Sole object of all my desires,
 Who know'st what a flame I conceive
 And canst easily double its fires ;
 How pleasant is all that I meet !
 From fear of adversity free
 I find even sorrow made sweet ;
 Because 'tis assigned me by thee.

Transported I see thee display
 Thy riches and glory divine ;
 I have only my life to repay,
 Take what I would gladly resign.
 Thy will is the treasure I seek,
 For Thou art as faithful as strong ;
 There let me, obedient and meek,
 Repose myself all the day long.

My spirit and faculties fail ;
 Oh finish what love has begun !
 Destroy what is sinful and frail,
 And dwell in the soul thou hast won !
 Dear theme of my wonder and praise,
 I cry, who is worthy as thou !
 I can only be silent and gaze :
 'Tis all that is left of me now.

O glory in which I am lost,
 Too deep for the plummet of thought !
 On an ocean of deity tossed,
 I am swallowed, I sink into nought.
 Yet, lost and absorbed as I seem,
 I chant to the praise of my King ;
 And, though overwhelmed by the theme,
 Am happy whenever I sing.

GRATITUDE AND LOVE TO GOD

ALL are indebted much to Thee
 But I far more than all,
 From many a deadly snare set free
 And raised from many a fall.
 Overwhelm me from above,
 Daily, with thy boundless love !

What bonds of gratitude I feel
 No language can declare ;
 Beneath the oppressive weight I reel,
 'Tis more than I can bear :
 When shall I that blessing prove
 To return thee love for love ?

Spirit of Charity, dispense
 Thy grace to every heart ;
 Expel all other spirits thence,
 Drive self from every part ;
 Charity divine, draw nigh,
 Break the chains in which we lie !

All selfish souls, whate'er they feign,
 Have still a slavish lot ;
 They boast of liberty in vain,
 Of love, and feel it not.
 He whose bosom glows with thee,
 He, and he alone, is free.

O blessedness, all bliss above,
 When thy pure fires prevail !
 Love only teaches what is love ;
 All other lessons fail :
 We learn its name, but not its powers,
 Experience only makes it ours.

HAPPY SOLITUDE—UNHAPPY MEN

My heart is easy and my burthen light ;
 I smile, though sad, when Thou art in my sight :
 The more my woes in secret I deplore,
 I taste thy goodness, and I love thee more.

There, while a solemn stillness reigns around,
 Faith, Love, and Hope within my soul abound ;
 And while the world suppose me lost in care,
 The joys of angels, unperceived, I share.

Thy creatures wrong thee, O Thou Sovereign Good !
 Thou art not loved, because not understood ;
 This grieves me most, that vain pursuits beguile
 Ungrateful men, regardless of Thy smile.

Frail beauty and false honour are adored ;
 While thee they scorn, and trifle with thy Word ;
 Pass, unconcerned, a Saviour's sorrows by ;
 And hunt their ruin with a zeal to die.

LIVING WATER

THE fountain in its source
 No drought of summer fears ;
 The farther it pursues its course
 The nobler it appears.

But shallow cisterns yield
 A scanty short supply ;
 The morning sees them amply filled,
 The evening finds them dry.

TRUTH AND DIVINE LOVE REJECTED BY THE WORLD

O LOVE, of pure and heavenly birth !
 O simple Truth, scarce known on earth !
 Whom men resist with stubborn will ;
 And, more perverse and daring still,
 Smother and quench with reasonings vain
 While error and deception reign.

Whence comes it, that, your power the same
 As His on high, from whence you came,
 Ye rarely find a listening ear,
 Or heart that makes you welcome here ?—
 Because ye bring reproach and pain,
 Where'er ye visit, in your train.

The world is proud, and cannot bear
 The scorn and calumny ye share ;
 The praise of men the mark they mean,
 They fly the place where ye are seen ;
 Pure Love, with scandal in the rear,
 Suits not the vain ; it costs too dear.

Then, let the price be what it may,
 Though poor, I am prepared to pay ;
 Come shame, come sorrow ; spite of tears,
 Weakness, and heart-oppressing fears ;
 One soul, at least, shall not repine
 To give you room ; come, reign in mine !

DIVINE JUSTICE AMIABLE

Thou hast no lightnings, O Thou Just .
Or I their force should know ;
And if Thou strike me into dust,
My soul approves the blow.

The heart that values less its ease
Than it adores thy ways
In thine avenging anger sees
A subject of its praise.

Pleased I could lie, concealed and lost,
In shades of central night ;
Not to avoid thy wrath, thou knowest,
But lest I grieve thy sight.

Smite me, O thou, whom I provoke ;
And I will love thee still ;
The well-deserved and righteous stroke
Shall please me, though it kill.

Am I not worthy to sustain
The worst thou canst devise ?
And dare I seek thy throne again,
And meet thy sacred eyes ?

Far from afflicting, thou art kind ;
And in my saddest hours
An unction of thy grace I find
Pervading all my powers.

Alas ! thou spar'st me yet again ;
And when thy wrath should move,
Too gentle to endure my pain,
Thou sooth'st me with thy love.

I have no punishment to fear ;
But, ah ! that smile from thee
Imparts a pang far more severe
Than woe itself would be.

THE SOUL THAT LOVES GOD FINDS HIM EVERYWHERE

O THOU, by long experience tried,
Near whom no grief can long abide ;
My Love ! how full of sweet content
I pass my years of banishment !

All scenes alike engaging prove
To souls impressed with sacred Love !
Where'er they dwell, they dwell in Thee ;
In heaven, in earth, or on the sea.

To me remains nor place nor time !
My country is in every clime ;
I can be calm and free from care
On any shore, since God is there.

While place we seek, or place we shun,
The soul finds happiness in none ;
But, with a God to guide our way,
'Tis equal joy to go or stay.

Could I be cast where thou art not,
That were indeed a dreadful lot ;
But regions none remote I call,
Secure of finding God in all.

My country, Lord, art Thou alone ;
Nor other can I claim or own ;
The point where all my wishes meet ;
My law, my love ; life's only sweet !

I hold by nothing here below ;
Appoint my journey, and I go ;
Though pierced by scorn, oppressed by pride,
I feel thee good, feel nought beside.

No frowns of men can hurtful prove
To souls on fire with heavenly Love !
Though men and devils both condemn,
No gloomy days arise for them.

Ah, then ! to his embrace repair ;
My soul, thou art no stranger there ;
There Love divine shall be thy guard,
And peace and safety thy reward.

THE TESTIMONY OF DIVINE ADOPTION

How happy are the new-born race ;
Partakers of adopting grace,
How pure the bliss they share !
Hid from the world and all its eyes,
Within their heart the blessing lies,
And conscience feels it there.

The moment we believe, 'tis ours ;
And if we love with all our powers
The God from whom it came,
And if we serve with hearts sincere
'Tis still discernible and clear,
An undisputed claim.

But, ah ! if foul and wilful sin
Stain and dishonour us within,
Farewell the joy we knew ;
Again the slaves of Nature's sway,
In lab'rins of our own we stray
Without a guide or clue.

The chaste and pure, who fear to grieve
The gracious Spirit they receive,
His work distinctly trace ;
And, strong in undissembling love,
Boldly assert and clearly prove
Their hearts his dwelling-place.

O messenger of dear delight
Whose voice dispels the deepest night,
Sweet peace-proclaiming Dove !
With thee at hand to soothe our pains,
No wish unsatisfied remains,
No task but that of Love.

'Tis Love unites what sin divides ;
The centre, where all bliss resides ;
To which the soul once brought,
Reclining on the first great Cause,
From his abounding sweetness draws
Peace passing human thought.

Sorrow forgoes its nature there,
 And life assumes a tranquil air,
 Divested of its woes ;
 There sovereign goodness soothes the breast
 Till then incapable of rest,
 In sacred sure repose.

DIVINE LOVE ENDURES NO RIVAL

Love is the Lord whom I obey,
 Whose will transported I perform ;
 The centre of my rest, my stay,
 Love all in all to me, myself a worm.

For uncreated charms I burn,
 Oppressed by slavish fear no more ;
 For One in whom I may discern,
 Even when he frowns, a sweetness I adore.

He little loves him who complains
 And finds him rigorous and severe ;
 His heart is sordid, and he feigns,
 Though loud in boasting of a soul sincere.

Love causes grief, but 'tis to move
 And stimulate the slumbering mind ;
 And he has never tasted love
 Who shuns a pang so graciously designed.

Sweet is the cross above all sweets
 To souls enamoured with Thy smiles ;
 The keenest woe life ever meets
 Love strips of all its terrors, and beguiles.

'Tis just that God should not be dear
 Where self engrosses all the thought,
 And groans and murmurs make it clear,
 Whatever else is loved, the Lord is not.

The love of Thee flows just as much
 As that of ebbing self subsides ;
 Our hearts, their scantiness is such,
 Bear not the conflict of two rival tides.

Both cannot govern in one soul ;
 Then let self-love be dispossessed ;
 The love of God deserves the whole,
 And will not dwell with so despised a guest.

SELF-DIFFIDENCE

SOURCE of love, and light of day,
Tear me from myself away ;
Every view and thought of mine
Cast into the mould of thine ;
Teach, oh teach this faithless heart
A consistent, constant part ;
Or, if it must live to grow
More rebellious, break it now !

Is it thus that I requite
Grace and goodness infinite ?
Every trace of every boon
Cancelled and erased so soon !
Can I grieve thee, whom I love ;
Thee, in whom I live and move ?
If my sorrow touch thee still,
Save me from so great an ill !

Oh ! the oppressive irksome weight
Felt in an uncertain state ;
Comfort, peace, and rest, adieu,
Should I prove at last untrue !
Still I choose thee, follow still
Every notice of thy will ;
But, unstable, strangely weak,
Still let slip the good I seek.

Self-confiding wretch, I thought
I could serve thee as I ought,
Win thee, and deserve to feel
All the Love thou canst reveal !
Trusting self, a bruised reed,
Is to be deceived indeed.
Save me from this harm and loss,
Lest my gold turn all to dross !

Self is earthly—faith alone
Makes an unseen world our own ;
Faith relinquished, how we roam,
Feel our way, and leave our home !
Spurious gems our hopes entice,
While we scorn the pearl of price ;
And, preferring servants' pay,
Cast the children's bread away.

THE ACQUIESCENCE OF PURE LOVE

Love ! if thy destined sacrifice am I,
 Come, slay thy victim, and prepare thy fires ;
 Plunged in thy depths of mercy, let me die
 The death which every soul that lives desires !

I watch my hours, and see them fleet away ;
 The time is long that I have languished here ;
 Yet all my thoughts thy purposes obey
 With no reluctance, cheerful and sincere.

To me 'tis equal, whether Love ordain
 My life or death, appoint me pain or ease ;
 My soul perceives no real ill in pain ;
 In ease or health no real good she sees.

One good she covets, and that good alone ;
 To choose thy will, from selfish bias free ;
 And to prefer a cottage to a throne
 And grief to comfort, if it pleases thee.

That we should bear the cross is thy command,
 Die to the world, and live to self no more ;
 Suffer, unmoved, beneath the rudest hand,
 As pleased when shipwrecked as when safe on shore.

REPOSE IN GOD

Blest ! who, far from all mankind,
 This world's shadows left behind,
 Hears from heaven a gentle strain
 Whispering Love, and loves again.

Blest ! who, free from self-esteem,
 Dives into the great Supreme,
 All desire besides discards,
 Joys inferior none regards.

Blest ! who in Thy bosom seeks
 Rest that nothing earthly breaks,
 Dead to self and worldly things,
 Lost in Thee, Thou King of kings !

Ye that know my secret fire,
Softly speak and soon retire ;
Favour my divine repose,
Spare the sleep a God bestows.

GLORY TO GOD ALONE

Oh, loved ! but not enough—though dearer far
Than self and its most loved enjoyments are ;
None duly loves Thee, but who, nobly free
From sensual objects, finds his all in thee.

Glory of God ! thou stranger here below,
Whom man nor knows, nor feels a wish to know ;
Our faith and reason are both shocked to find
Man in the post of honour—thee behind.

Reason exclaims—" Let every creature fall,
" Ashamed, abased, before the Lord of all !"
And faith, o'erwhelmed with such a dazzling blaze,
Feebly describes the beauty she surveys.

Yet man, dim-sighted man, and rash as blind,
Deaf to the dictates of his better mind,
In frantic competition dares the skies,
And claims precedence of the Only Wise.

Oh, lost in vanity, till once self-known !
Nothing is great, or good, but God alone ;
When thou shalt stand before his awful face,
Then, at the last, thy pride shall know his place.

Glorious, Almighty, First, and without end !
When wilt thou melt the mountains and descend ?
When wilt thou shoot abroad thy conquering rays,
And teach these atoms thou hast made thy praise ?

Thy Glory is the sweetest heaven I feel ;
And, if I seek it with too fierce a zeal,
Thy Love, triumphant o'er a selfish will,
Taught me the passion, and inspires it still.

My reason, all my faculties, unite
To make thy Glory their supreme delight ;
Forbid it, Fountain of my brightest days,
That I should rob thee, and usurp thy praise !

My soul ! rest happy in thy low estate,
 Nor hope, nor wish, to be esteemed or great ;
 To take the impression of a will divine,
 Be that thy glory, and those riches thine.

Confess him righteous in his just decrees,
 Love what he loves, and let his pleasure please ;
 Die daily ; from the touch of sin recede ;
 Then thou hast crowned him, and he reigns indeed.

SELF-LOVE AND TRUTH INCOMPATIBLE

FROM thorny wilds a monster came
 That filled my soul with fear and shame ;
 The birds, forgetful of their mirth,
 Droop'd at the sight, and fell to earth ;
 When thus a sage addressed mine ear,
 Himself unconscious of a fear :
 " Whence all this terror and surprise,
 " Distracted looks and streaming eyes ?
 " Far from the world and its affairs,
 " The joy it boasts, the pain it shares,
 " Surrender, without guile or art,
 " To God an undivided heart ;
 " The savage form, so feared before,
 " Shall scare your trembling soul no more :
 " For loathsome as the sight may be,
 " 'Tis but the *love of self* you see.
 " Fix all your love on God alone,
 " Choose but his will, and hate your own,
 " No fear shall in your path be found,
 " The dreary waste shall bloom around,
 " And you, through all your happy days,
 " Shall bless his name, and sing his praise."

O lovely solitude, how sweet
 The silence of this calm retreat !
 Here Truth, the fair whom I pursue,
 Gives all her beauty to my view ;
 The simple unadorned display
 Charms every pain and fear away.
 O Truth, whom millions proudly slight ;
 O Truth, my treasure and delight !
 Accept this tribute to thy name,
 And this poor heart from which it came !

THE LOVE OF GOD THE END OF LIFE

SINCE life in sorrow must be spent,
 So be it—I am well content,
 And meekly wait my last remove
 Seeking only growth in love.

No bliss I seek, but to fulfil
 In life, in death, Thy lovely will;
 No succours in my woes I want,
 Save what Thou art pleased to grant.

Our days are numbered, let us spare
 Our anxious hearts a needless care :
 'Tis thine to number out our days ;
 Ours to give them to thy praise.

Love is our only business here,
 Love, simple, constant, and sincere ;
 O blessed days thy servants see,
 Spent, O Lord ! in pleasing thee.

LOVE FAITHFUL IN THE ABSENCE OF THE BELOVED

IN vain ye woo me to your harmless joys,
 Ye pleasant bowers, remote from strife and noise ;
 Your shades, the witnesses of many a vow
 Breathed forth in happier days, are irksome now ;
 Denied that smile 'twas once my heaven to see,
 Such scenes, such pleasures, are all past with me.
 In vain He leaves me, I shall love Him still ;
 And, though I mourn, not murmur at His will ;
 I have no cause—an object all divine
 Might well grow weary of a soul like mine ;
 Yet pity me, great God ! forlorn, alone,
 Heartless and hopeless, Life and Love all gone.

LOVE PURE AND FERVENT

JEALOUS, and with love o'erflowing,
 God demands a fervent heart ;
 Grace and bounty still bestowing
 Calls us to a grateful part.

Oh, then, with supreme affection
 His paternal Will regard !
 If it cost us some dejection,
 Every sigh has its reward.

Perfect Love has power to soften
 Cares that might our peace destroy ;
 Nay, does more—transforms them often,
 Changing sorrow into joy.

Sovereign Love appoints the measure
 And the number of our pains ;
 And is pleased when we find pleasure
 In the trials He ordains.

THE ENTIRE SURRENDER

PEACE has unveiled her smiling face,
 And woos thy soul to her embrace,
 Enjoyed with ease, if thou refrain
 From earthly love, else sought in vain ;
 She dwells with all who Truth prefer,
 But seeks not them who seek not her.

Yield to the Lord, with simple heart,
 All that thou hast, and all thou art ;
 Renounce all strength but strength divine,
 And peace shall be for ever thine :
 Behold the path which I have trod,
 My path, till I go home to God.

THE PERFECT SACRIFICE

I PLACE an offering at Thy shrine,
 From taint and blemish clear,
 Simple and pure in its design,
 Of all that I owe dear.

I yield thee back thy gifts again,
 Thy gifts which most I prize ;
 Desirous only to retain
 The notice of thine eyes.

WILLIAM COWPER

But if, by thine adored decree,
That blessing be denied ;
Resigned and unreluctant, see
My every wish subside.

Thy will in all things I approve,
Exalted or cast down !
Thy will in every state I love,
And even in thy frown.

GOD HIDES HIS PEOPLE

To lay the soul that loves him low
Becomes the Only Wise :
To hide, beneath a veil of woe,
The children of the skies.

Man, though a worm, would yet be great ;
Though feeble, would seem strong ;
Assumes an independent state
By sacrilege and wrong.

Strange the reverse, which, once abased,
The haughty creature proves !
He feels his soul a barren waste,
Nor dares affirm he loves.

Scorn'd by the thoughtless and the vain
To God he presses near ;
Superior to the world's disdain
And happy in its sneer.

Oh welcome, in his heart he says,
Humility and shame !
Farewell the wish for human praise,
The music of a name !

But will not scandal mar the good
That I might else perform ?
And can God work it, if he would,
By so despised a worm ?

Ah, vainly anxious !—leave the Lord
To rule thee, and dispose ;
Sweet is the mandate of his word,
And gracious all he does.

He draws from human littleness
His grandeur and renown ;
And generous hearts with joy confess
The triumph all his own.

Down then with self-exalting thoughts !
Thy faith and hope employ
To welcome all that he allots,
And suffer shame with joy.

No longer, then, thou wilt encroach
On his eternal right ;
And he shall smile at thy approach,
And make thee his delight.

THE SECRETS OF DIVINE LOVE ARE TO BE KEPT

SUN ! stay thy course, this moment stay—
Suspend the o'erflowing tide of day,
Divulge not such a love as mine,
Ah ! hide the mystery divine ;
Lest man, who deems my glory shame,
Should learn the secret of my flame.

O Night ! propitious to my views,
Thy sable awning wide diffuse :
Conceal alike my joy and pain,
Nor draw thy curtain back again,
Though morning, by the tears she shows,
Seems to participate my woes.

Ye Stars ! whose faint and feeble fires
Express my languishing desires,
Whose slender beams pervade the skies
As silent as my secret sighs,
Those emanations of a soul
That darts her fires beyond the pole ;

Your rays, that scarce assist the sight,
That pierce, but not displace, the night,
That shine indeed, but nothing show
Of all those various scenes below,
Bring no disturbance, rather prove
Incentives of a sacred love.

Thou Moon ! whose never-failing course
Bespeaks a providential force,
Go, tell the tidings of my flame
To him who calls the stars by name,
Whose absence kills, whose presence cheers,
Who blots or brightens all my years.

While, in the blue abyss of space,
Thine orb performs its rapid race,
Still whisper in his listening ears
The language of my sighs and tears ;
Tell him, I seek him, far below,
Lost in a wilderness of woe.

Ye thought-composing, silent Hours,
Diffusing peace o'er all my powers,
Friends of the pensive ! who conceal
In darkest shades the flames I feel ;
To you I trust, and safely may,
The love that wastes my strength away.

In sylvan scenes and caverns rude,
I taste the sweets of solitude ;
Retired indeed, but not alone,
I share them with a Spouse unknown
Who hides me here, from envious eyes,
From all intrusion and surprise.

Imbowering shades, and dens profound !
Where echo rolls the voice around !
Mountains ! whose elevated heads
A moist and misty veil o'erspreads ;
Disclose a solitary bride
To him I love—to none beside.

Ye rills ! that, murmuring all the way,
Among the polished pebbles stray ;
Creep silently along the ground,
Lest, drawn by that harmonious sound,
Some wanderer, whom I would not meet,
Should stumble on my loved retreat.

Enamelled meads, and hillocks green,
And streams that water all the scene !
Ye torrents, loud in distant ears !
Ye fountains ? that receive my tears !
Ah ! still conceal, with caution due,
A charge I trust with none but you.

If, when my pain and grief increase,
 I seem to enjoy the sweetest peace,
 It is because I find so fair
 The charming object of my care,
 That I can sport and pleasure make
 Of torment suffered for his sake.

Ye meads and groves, unconscious things !
 Ye know not whence my pleasure springs ;
 Ye know not, and ye cannot know,
 The source from which my sorrows flow :
 The dear sole Cause of all I feel,—
 He knows, and understands them well.

Ye deserts ! where the wild beasts rove,
 Scenes sacred to my hours of love ;
 Ye forests ! in whose shades I stray
 Benighted under burning day ;
 Ah ! whisper not how blest am I,
 Nor while I live, nor when I die.

Ye lambs ! who sport beneath these shades
 And bound along the mossy glades,
 Be taught a salutary fear,
 And cease to bleat when I am near :
 The wolf may hear your harmless cry,
 Whom ye should dread as much as I.

How calm, amid these scenes, my mind !
 How perfect is the peace I find !
 Oh, hush, be still, my every part,
 My tongue, my pulse, my beating heart !
 That Love, aspiring to its cause,
 May suffer not a moment's pause.

Ye swift-finned nations, that abide
 In seas as fathomless as wide ;
 And, unsuspecting of a snare,
 Pursue at large your pleasures there :
 Poor sportive fools ! how soon does man
 Your heedless ignorance trepan !

Away ! dive deep into the brine,
 Where never yet sunk plummet-line ;
 Trust me, the vast Leviathan
 Is merciful, compared with man ;
 Avoid his arts, forsake the beach,
 And never play within his reach !

My soul her bondage ill endures ;
 I pant for liberty like yours ;
 I long for that immense profound
 That knows no bottom and no bound ;
 Lost in infinity, to prove
 The incomprehensible of Love.

Ye birds ! that lessen as ye fly,
 And vanish in the distant sky ;
 To whom yon airy waste belongs,
 Resounding with your cheerful songs ;
 Haste to escape from human sight !
 Fear less the vulture and the kite.

How blest and how secure am I
 When, quitting earth, I soar on high ;
 When, lost, like you I disappear,
 And float in a sublimer sphere !
 Whence falling, within human view,
 I am ensnared, and caught like you.

Omniscient God, whose notice deigns
 To try the heart and search the reins,
 Compassionate the numerous woes
 I dare not, even to thee, disclose ;
 Oh save me from the cruel hands
 Of men, who fear not thy commands !

Love, all-subduing and divine,
 Care for a creature truly thine ;
 Reign in a heart disposed to own
 No sovereign but thyself alone ;
 Cherish a bride who cannot rove,
 Nor quit thee for a meaner love !

THE VICISSITUDES EXPERIENCED IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

I SUFFER fruitless anguish day by day,
 Each moment, as it passes, marks my pain ;
 Scarce knowing whither, doubtfully I stray,
 And see no end of all that I sustain.

The more I strive the more I am withstood ;
 Anxiety increasing every hour,
 My spirit finds no rest, performs no good,
 And nought remains of all my former power.

My peace of heart is fled, I know not where ;
 My happy hours, like shadows, passed away ;
 Their sweet remembrance doubles all my care,
 Night darker seems succeeding such a day.

Dear faded joys, and impotent regret,
 What profit is there in incessant tears ?
 O Thou, whom, once beheld, we ne'er forget,
 Reveal thy Love, and banish all my fears !

Alas ! He flies me—treats me as his foe,
 Views not my sorrows, hears not when I plead ;
 Woe such as mine, despised, neglected woe,
 Unless it shortens life, is vain indeed.

Pierced with a thousand wounds, I yet survive ;
 My pangs are keen, but no complaint transpires ;
 And while in terrors of thy wrath I live,
 Hell seems to lose its less tremendous fires.

Has hell a pain I would not gladly bear,
 So thy severe displeasure might subside ?
 Hopeless of ease, I seem already there,
 My life extinguished, and yet death denied.

Is this the joy so promised ?—this the love,
 The unchanging love, so sworn in better days ?
 Ah ! dangerous glories ! shown me but to prove
 How lovely thou, and I how rash to gaze.

Why did I see them ? had I still remained
 Untaught, still ignorant how fair thou art,
 My humbler wishes I had soon obtained,
 Nor known the torments of a doubting heart.

Deprived of all, yet feeling no desires,
 Whence then, I cry, the pangs that I sustain ?
 Dubious and uninformed, my soul inquires—
 Ought she to cherish or shake off her pain ?

Suffering, I suffer not ; sincerely love,
 Yet feel no touch of that enlivening flame ;
 As chance inclines me, unconcerned I move,
 All times, and all events, to me the same.

I search my heart, and not a wish is there,
 But burns with zeal that hated self may fall :
 Such is the sad disquietude I share,
 A sea of doubts, and self the source of all.

I ask not life, nor do I wish to die ;
And, if thine hand accomplish not my cure,
I would not purchase with a single sigh
A free discharge from all that I endure.

I groan in chains, yet want not a release ;
Am sick, and know not the distempered part ;
Am just as void of purpose as of peace ;
Have neither plan, nor fear, nor hope, nor heart.

My claim to life, though sought with earnest care,
No light within me or without me shows ;
Once I had faith, but now in self-despair
Find my chief cordial and my best repose.

My soul is a forgotten thing ; she sinks,
Sinks and is lost, without a wish to rise ;
Feels an indifference she abhors, and thinks
Her name erased for ever from the skies.

Language affords not my distress a name,—
Yet is it real, and no sickly dream ;
'Tis Love inflicts it ; though to feel that flame
Is all I know of happiness supreme.

When Love departs, a chaos wide and vast,
And dark as hell, is opened in the soul ;
When Love returns, the gloomy scene is past,
No tempests shake her, and no fears control.

Then tell me why these ages of delay ?
O Love, all excellent, once more appear,
Disperse the shades, and snatch me into day,
From this abyss of night, these floods of fear !

No—Love is angry, will not now endure
A sigh of mine, or suffer a complaint ;
He smites me, wounds me, and withholds the cure ;
Exhausts my powers, and leaves me sick and faint.

He wounds, and hides the hand that gave the blow ;
He flies, he reappears, and wounds again :—
Was ever heart that loved thee treated so ?
Yet I adore thee, though it seem in vain.

And wilt thou leave me, whom, when lost and blind,
Thou didst distinguish and vouchsafe to choose,
Before thy laws were written in my mind,
While yet the world had all my thoughts and views ?

Now leave me? when, enamoured of thy laws,
 I make thy glory my supreme delight;
 Now blot me from thy register, and cause
 A faithful soul to perish from thy sight?

What can have caused the change which I deplore?
 Is it to prove me, if my heart be true?
 Permit me then, while prostrate I adore,
 To draw, and place its picture in thy view.

'Tis thine without reserve, most simply thine;
 So given to thee, that it is not my own;
 A willing captive of thy grace divine;
 And loves, and seeks thee, for thyself alone.

Pain cannot move it, danger cannot scare;
 Pleasure and wealth, in its esteem, are dust;
 It loves thee, even when least inclined to spare
 Its tenderest feelings, and avows thee just.

'Tis all thine own; my spirit is so too,
 An undivided offering at thy shrine;
 It seeks thy glory with no double view,
 Thy glory, with no secret bent to mine.

Love, holy Love! and art thou not severe,
 To slight me, thus devoted and thus fixed?
 Mine is an everlasting ardour, clear
 From all self-bias, generous and unmixed.

But I am silent, seeing what I see,—
 And fear, with cause, that I am self-deceived;
 Not even my faith is from suspicion free,
 And that I love seems not to be believed.

Live thou, and reign for ever, glorious Lord!
 My last, least offering, I present thee now;—
 Renounce me, leave me, and be still adored!
 Slay me, my God, and I applaud the blow.

WATCHING UNTO GOD IN THE NIGHT SEASON

SLEEP at last has fled these eyes,
 Nor do I regret his flight;
 More alert my spirits rise,
 And my heart is free and light.

WILLIAM COWPER

Nature silent all around,
 Not a single witness near ;
 God as soon as sought is found,
 And the flame of love burns clear.

Interruption, all day long,
 Checks the current of my joys
 Creatures press me with a throng,
 And perplex me with their noise

Undisturbed I muse all night
 On the First Eternal Fair ;
 Nothing there obstructs delight,
 Love is renovated there.

Life, with its perpetual stir,
 Proves a foe to Love and me ;
 Fresh entanglements occur,—
 Comes the night, and sets me free.

Never more, sweet sleep, suspend
 My enjoyments, always new :
 Leave me to possess my friend ;
 Other eyes and hearts subdue.

Hush the world, that I may wake
 To the taste of pure delights ;
 Oh the pleasures I partake,—
 God the partner of my nights !

David, for the selfsame cause,
 Night preferred to busy day :
 Hearts whom heavenly beauty draws
 Wish the glaring sun away.

Sleep, self-lovers, is for you ;—
 Souls that love celestial know
 Fairer scenes by night can view
 Than the sun can ever show.

ON THE SAME

SEASON of my purest pleasure,
 Sealer of observing eyes !
 When, in larger, freer measure,
 I can commune with the skies ;

While, beneath thy shade extended,
 Weary man forgets his woes,
 I, my daily trouble ended,
 Find in watching my repose.

Silence all around prevailing,
 Nature hushed in slumber sweet,
 No rude noise mine ears assailing,
 Now my God and I can meet :
 Universal nature slumbers,
 And my soul partakes the calm,
 Breathes her ardour out in numbers,
 Plaintive song or lofty psalm.

Now my passion, pure and holy,
 Shines and burns without restraint,
 Which the day's fatigue and folly
 Caused to languish, dim and faint :
 Charming hours of relaxation !
 How I dread the ascending sun !
 Surely idle conversation
 Is an evil, matched by none.

Worldly prate and babble hurt me,
 Unintelligible prove,
 Neither teach me nor divert me ;
 I have ears for none but Love.
 Me they rude esteem, and foolish,
 Hearing my absurd replies ;
 I have neither art's fine polish
 Nor the knowledge of the wise.

Simple souls, and unpolluted
 By conversing with the great,
 Have a mind and taste ill suited
 To their dignity and state ;
 All their talking, reading, writing,
 Are but talents misapplied ;
 Infants' prattle I delight in,
 Nothing human choose beside.

'Tis the secret fear of sinning
 Checks my tongue, or I should say,
 When I see the night beginning,
 I am glad of parting day :
 Love this gentle admonition
 Whispers soft within my breast ;
 "Choice befits not thy condition,
 "Acquiescence suits thee best."

Henceforth, the repose and pleasure
 Night affords me I resign ;
 And thy will shall be the measure,
 Wisdom Infinite ! of mine :
 Wishing is but inclination
 Quarrelling with thy decrees ;
 Wayward nature finds the occasion,—
 'Tis her folly and disease.

Night, with its sublime enjoyments,
 Now no longer will I choose ;
 Nor the day with its employments,
 Irksome as they seem, refuse :
 Lessons of a God's inspiring
 Neither time nor place impedes ;
 From our wishing and desiring
 Our unhappiness proceeds.

ON THE SAME

NIGHT ! how I love thy silent shades,
 My spirit they compose ;
 The bliss of heaven my soul pervades,
 In spite of all my woes.

While sleep instils her poppy dew
 In every slumbering eye,
 I watch, to meditate and muse,
 In blest tranquillity.

And when I feel a God immense
 Familiarly impart,
 With every proof he can dispense,
 His favour to my heart ;

My native meanness I lament,
 Though most divinely filled
 With all the ineffable content
 That Deity can yield.

His purpose and his course he keeps ;
 Treads all my reasonings down ;
 Commands me out of nature's deeps,
 And hides me in his own.

When in the dust, its proper place,
 Our pride of heart we lay,
 'Tis then a deluge of his grace
 Bears all our sins away.

Thou whom I serve, and whose I am,
 Whose influence from on high
 Refines and still refines my flame,
 And makes my fetters fly ;

How wretched is the creature's state
 Who thwarts thy gracious power ;
 Crushed under sin's enormous weight,
 Increasing every hour !

The night, when passed entire with thee,
 How luminous and clear ;
 Then sleep has no delights for me,
 Lest thou shouldst disappear.

My Saviour ! occupy me still
 In this secure recess ;
 Let reason slumber if she will,
 My joy shall not be less :

Let reason slumber out the night ;
 But if thou deign to make
 My soul the abode of truth and light,
 Ah, keep my heart awake !

THE JOY OF THE CROSS

Long plunged in sorrow, I resign
 My soul to that dear hand of thine
 Without reserve or fear ;
 That hand shall wipe my streaming eyes,
 Or into smiles of glad surprise
 Transform the falling tear.

My sole possession is thy love ;
 In earth beneath, or heaven above,
 I have no other store ;
 And though with fervent suit I pray,
 And importune thee night and day,
 I ask thee nothing more,

My rapid hours pursue the course
 Prescribed them by love's sweetest force,
 And I thy sovereign will ;
 Without a wish to escape my doom,
 Though still a sufferer from the womb,
 And doomed to suffer still.

By thy command, where'er I stray,
 Sorrow attends me all my way,
 A never-failing friend ;
 And if my sufferings may augment
 Thy praise, behold me well content,—
 Let sorrow still attend !

It costs me no regret, that she
 Who followed Christ should follow me ;
 And though, where'er she goes,
 Thorns spring spontaneous at her feet,
 I love her, and extract a sweet
 From all my bitter woes.

Adieu, ye vain delights of earth !
 Insipid sports, and childish mirth,
 I taste no sweets in you ;
 Unknown delights are in the Cross,
 All joy beside to me is dross ;
 And Jesus thought so too.

The Cross ! oh, ravishment and bliss,—
 How grateful even its anguish is,
 Its bitterness how sweet !
 There every sense, and all the mind
 In all her faculties refined,
 Tastes happiness complete.

Souls once enabled to disdain
 Base sublunary joys, maintain
 Their dignity secure ;
 The fever of desire is past,
 And love has all its genuine taste,
 Is delicate and pure.

Self-love no grace in sorrow sees,
 Consults her own peculiar ease ;
 'Tis all the bliss she knows :
 But nobler aims true love employ ;
 In self-denial is her joy,
 In suffering her repose.

Sorrow and love go side by side :
 Nor height nor depth can e'er divide
 Their heaven-appointed bands ;
 Those dear associates still are one,
 Nor till the race of life is run
 Disjoin their wedded hands.

Jesus, avenger of our fall,
 Thou faithful lover above all
 The Cross has ever borne !
 Oh tell me,—life is in thy voice,—
 How much afflictions were thy choice,
 And sloth and ease thy scorn !

Thy choice and mine shall be the same,
 Inspirer of that holy flame
 Which must for ever blaze !
 To take the Cross and follow thee
 Where love and duty lead shall be
 My portion and my praise.

JOY IN MARTYRDOM

SWEET tenants of this grove
 Who sing, without design,
 A song of artless love
 In unison with mine :
 These echoing shades return
 Full many a note of ours
 That wise ones cannot learn
 With all their boasted powers.

O Thou ! whose sacred charms
 These hearts so seldom love,
 Although thy beauty warms
 And blesses all above ;
 How slow are human things
 To choose their happiest lot !
 All-glorious King of kings,
 Say why we love thee not ?

This heart that cannot rest
 Shall thine for ever prove ;
 Though bleeding and distressed,
 Yet joyful in thy love :

WILLIAM COWPER

'Tis happy, though it breaks
 Beneath thy chastening hand ;
 And speechless,—yet it speaks
 What thou canst understand.

SIMPLE TRUST

STILL, still, without ceasing
 I feel it increasing,
 This fervour of holy desire ;
 And often exclaim,
 Let me die in the flame
 Of a love that can never expire !

Had I words to explain
 What she must sustain
 Who dies to the world and its ways :
 How joy and affright,
 Distress and delight,
 Alternately chequer her days ;

Thou, sweetly severe !
 I would make thee appear,
 In all thou art pleased to award,
 Not more in the sweet
 Than the bitter I meet
 My tender and merciful Lord.

This faith, in the dark
 Pursuing its mark
 Through many sharp trials of love,
 Is the sorrowful waste
 That is to be passed
 In the way to the Canaan above.

THE NECESSITY OF SELF-ABASEMENT

SOURCE of Love, my brighter Sun,
 Thou alone my comfort art ;
 See, my race is almost run ;
 Hast thou left this trembling heart ?

In my youth thy charming eyes
 Drew me from the ways of men ;
 Then I drank unmingled joys ;
 Frown of thine saw never then.

Spouse of Christ was then my name :
 And devoted all to thee
 Strangely jealous I became,
 Jealous of this self in me.

Thee to love, and none beside,
 Was my darling, sole employ ;
 While alternately I died
 Now of grief, and now of joy.

Through the dark and silent night
 On thy radiant smiles I dwelt ;
 And to see the dawning light
 Was the keenest pain I felt.

Thou my gracious teacher wert ;
 And thine eye, so close applied,
 While it watched thy pupil's heart,
 Seemed to look at none beside.

Conscious of no evil drift,
 This, I cried, is love indeed !—
 'Tis the Giver, not the gift,
 Whence the joys I feel proceed.

But soon humbled, and laid low,
 Stript of all thou hadst conferred,
 Nothing left but sin and woe,
 I perceived how I had erred.

Oh the vain conceit of man,
 Dreaming of a good his own,
 Arrogating all he can,
 Though the Lord is good alone !

He the graces thou hast wrought
 Makes subservient to his pride ;
 Ignorant that one such thought
 Passes all his sin beside.

Such is folly—proved, at last,
 By the loss of that repose
 Self-complacence cannot taste,
 Only Love Divine bestows.

'Tis by this reproof severe,
 And by this reproof alone,
 His defects at last appear,
 Man is to himself made known.

Learn, all earth ! that feeble man,
 Sprung from this terrestrial clod,
 Nothing is, and nothing can ;
 Life and power are all in God.

LOVE INCREASED BY SUFFERING

" I love the Lord " is still the strain
 This heart delights to sing ;
 But I reply,—“ Your thoughts are vain,
 “ Perhaps 'tis no such thing.”

Before the power of Love Divine
 Creation fades away ;
 Till only God is seen to shine
 In all that we survey.

In gulfs of awful night we find
 The God of our desires ;
 'Tis there he stamps the yielding mind
 And doubles all its fires.

Flames of encircling love invest
 And pierce it sweetly through ;
 'Tis filled with sacred joy, yet pressed
 With sacred sorrow too.

Ah Love ! my heart is in the right—
 Amidst a thousand woes,
 To thee its ever new delight
 And all its peace it owes.

Fresh causes of distress occur
 Where'er I look or move ;
 The comforts I to all prefer
 Are solitude and love.

Nor exile I nor prison fear ;
 Love makes my courage great ;
 I find a Saviour everywhere,
 His grace in every state.

Nor castle walls, nor dungeons deep,
 Exclude his quickening beams ;
 There I can sit, and sing, and weep,
 And dwell on heavenly themes.

There sorrow, for his sake, is found
 A joy beyond compare ;
 There no presumptuous thoughts abound,
 No pride can enter there.

A Saviour doubles all my joys,
 And sweetens all my pains,
 His strength in my defence employs,
 Consoles me and sustains.

I fear no ill, resent no wrong,
 Nor feel a passion move,
 When malice whets her slanderous tongue ;
 Such patience is in love.

SCENES FAVOURABLE TO MEDITATION.

WILDS horrid and dark with o'ershadowing trees,
 Rocks that ivy and briers infold,
 Scenes Nature with dread and astonishment sees,
 But I with a pleasure untold ;

Though awfully silent, and shaggy, and rude,
 I am charmed with the peace ye afford ;
 Your shades are a temple where none will intrude,
 The abode of my Lover and Lord.

I am sick of thy splendour, O fountain of day,
 And here I am hid from its beams ;
 Here safely contemplate a brighter display
 Of the noblest and holiest themes.

Ye forests, that yield me my sweetest repose,
 Where stillness and solitude reign,
 To you I securely and boldly disclose
 The dear anguish of which I complain.

Here, sweetly forgetting, and wholly forgot
 By the world and its turbulent throng,
 The birds and the streams lend me many a note
 That aids meditation and song.

Here, wandering in scenes that are sacred to night,
Love wears me and wastes me away ;
And often the sun has spent much of his light
Ere yet I perceive it is day.

While a mantle of darkness envelopes the sphere,
My sorrows are safely rehearsed ;
To me the dark hours are all equally dear,
And the last is as sweet as the first.

Here I and the beasts of the desert agree ;
Mankind are the wolves that I fear :
They grudge me my natural right to be free,
But nobody questions it here.

Though little is found in this dreary abode
That appetite wishes to find,
My spirit is soothed by the presence of God,
And appetite wholly resigned.

Ye desolate scenes, to your solitude led
My life I in praises employ,
And scarce know the source of the tears that I shed,
Proceed they from sorrow or joy.

There's nothing I seem to have skill to discern ;
I feel out my way in the dark ;
Love reigns in my bosom, I constantly burn
Yet hardly distinguish the spark.

I live, yet I seem myself to be dead ;
Such a riddle is not to be found ;
I am nourished without knowing how I am fed,
I have nothing, and yet I abound.

O Love ! who in darkness art pleased to abide,
Though dimly yet surely I see
That these contrarieties only reside
In the soul that is chosen of thee

Ah send me not back to the race of mankind,
Perversely by folly beguiled :
For where, in the crowds I have left, shall I find
The spirit and heart of a child ?

Here let me, though fixed in a desert, be free,
A little one whom they despise,
Though lost to the world, if in union with thee
Shall be holy and happy and wise.

Yrs Wm Cowper
Weston Jan 11

COWPER

FROM THE ENGRAVING BY FINDEN AFTER A DRAWING BY W. HARVEY OF THE
ORIGINAL PAINTING BY SIR THOMAS LAWRENCE

COMPLIMENTARY POEMS TO MILTON

FROM THE LATIN AND ITALIAN

THE NEAPOLITAN, JOHN BAPTIST MANSO

MARQUIS OF VILLA

TO THE ENGLISHMAN, JOHN MILTON

WHAT features, form, mien, manners, with a mind
Oh how intelligent and how refined !
Were but thy piety from fault as free,
Thou would'st no Angle but an Angel be.

AN EPIGRAM

ADDRESSED TO THE ENGLISHMAN, JOHN MILTON, A POET WORTHY OF
THREE LAURELS, THE GRECIAN, LATIN, AND ETRUSCAN,
BY JOHN SALSILLO, OF ROME

MELES and Mincio, both, your urns depress !
Sebetus, boast henceforth thy Tasso less !
But let the Thames o'erpeer all floods, since he,
For Milton famed, shall single match the three.

TO JOHN MILTON

GREECE, sound thy Homer's, Rome, thy Virgil's name,
But England's Milton equals both in fame.

SELVAGGI.

AN ODE

ADDRESSED TO THE ILLUSTRIOUS ENGLISHMAN, MR. JOHN MILTON,
BY SIGNOR ANTONIO FRANCINI, GENTLEMAN OF FLORENCE

EXALT me, Clio, to the skies,
That I may form a starry crown
Beyond what Helicon supplies
In laureate garlands of renown :
To nobler worth be brighter glory given,
And to a heavenly mind a recompense from heaven.

Time's wasteful hunger cannot prey
On everlasting high desert,
Nor can oblivion steal away
Its record graven in the heart ;
Lodge but an arrow, virtue, on the bow
That binds my lyre, and death shall be a vanquished foe.

In Ocean's blazing flood enshrined,
Whose vassal tide around her swells,
Albion, from other climes disjoined,
The prowess of the world excels ;
She teems with heroes that to glory rise
With more than human force in our astonished eyes.

To virtue driven from other lands
Their bosoms yield a safe retreat ;
Her law alone their deed commands,
Her smiles they feel divinely sweet.
Confirm this record, Milton, generous youth !
And by true virtue prove thy virtues' praise a truth.

Zeuxis, all energy and flame,
Set ardent forth in his career ;
Urged to his task by Helen's fame
Resounding ever in his ear ;
To make his image to her beauty true
From the collected fair each sovereign charm he drew.

The bee, with subtlest skill endued,
Thus toils to earn her precious juice
From all the flowery myriads strewed
O'er meadow and parterre profuse ;
Confederate voices one sweet air compound,
And various chords consent in one harmonious sound.

An artist of celestial aim,
Thy genius, caught by moral grace,
With ardent emulation's flame
The steps of virtue toiled to trace,
Observed in every land who brightest shone,
And, blending all their best, made perfect good thy own.

From all in Florence born, or taught
Our country's sweetest accent there,
Whose works, with learned labour wrought,
Immortal honours justly share,
Thou hast such treasure drawn of purest ore,
That not even Tuscan bards can boast a richer store.

Babel confused, and with her towers
Unfinished spreading wide the plain,
Has served but to evince thy powers
With all her tongues confused in vain,
Since not alone thy England's purest phrase
But every polished realm's thy various speech displays.

The secret things of heaven and earth,
By nature, too reserved, concealed
From other minds of highest worth,
To thee are copiously revealed ;
Thou knowest them clearly, and thy views attain
The utmost bounds prescribed to moral truth's domain.

Let time no more his wing display
And boast his ruinous career,
For virtue, rescued from his sway,
His injuries may cease to fear ;
Since all events that claim remembrance find
A chronicle exact in thy capacious mind.

Give me, that I may praise thy song,
Thy lyre, by which alone I can,
Which, placing thee the stars among,
Already proves thee more than man ;
And Thames shall seem Permessus, while his stream,
Graced with a swan like thee, shall be my favourite theme.

I who beside the Arno strain
To match thy merit with my lays,
Learn, after many an effort vain,
To admire thee rather than to praise,
And that by mute astonishment alone,
Not by the faltering tongue, thy worth may best be shown.

THE LATIN POEMS OF MILTON

ELEGIES

ELEGY I

TO CHARLES DEODATI

At length, my friend, the far-sent letters come,
 Charged with thy kindness, to their destined home ;
 They come, at length, from Deva's western side,
 Where prone she seeks the salt Vergivian tide.
 Trust me, my joy is great that thou shouldst be,
 Though born of foreign race, yet born for me,
 And that my sprightly friend, now free to roam,
 Must seek again so soon his wonted home.
 I well content, where Thames with reflux tide
 My native city laves, meantime reside,
 Nor zeal nor duty now my steps impel
 To reedy Cam, and my forbidden cell,
 Nor aught of pleasure in those fields have I,
 That, to the musing bard, all shade deny.
 'Tis time that I a pedant's threats disdain,
 And fly from wrongs my soul will ne'er sustain.
 If peaceful days, in lettered leisure spent
 Beneath my father's roof, be banishment,
 Then call me banished, I will ne'er refuse
 A name expressive of the lot I choose.
 I would that, exiled to the Pontic shore,
 Rome's hapless bard had suffered nothing more ;
 He then had equalled even Homer's lays,
 And Virgil ! thou hadst won but second praise.
 And here I woo the Muse, with no control ;
 And here my books—my life—absorb me whole.
 Here too I visit, or to smile or weep,
 The winding theatre's majestic sweep ;
 The grave or gay colloquial scene recruits
 My spirits, spent in learning's long pursuits,

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Whether some senior shrewd, or spendthrift heir,
 Suitor, or soldier now unarmed, be there ;
 Or some coifed brooder o'er a ten years' cause
 Thunder the Norman gibberish of the laws.
 The lacquey there oft dupes the wary sire,
 And artful speeds the enamoured son's desire.
 There virgins oft, unconscious what they prove,
 What love is know not, yet, unknowing, love.
 Or if impassioned Tragedy wield high
 The bloody sceptre, give her locks to fly 40
 Wild as the winds, and roll her haggard eye,
 I gaze, and grieve, still cherishing my grief.
 At times even bitter tears yield sweet relief :
 As when, from bliss untasted torn away,
 Some youth dies, hapless, on his bridal day ;—
 Or when the ghost, sent back from shades below,
 Fills the assassin's heart with vengeful woe,
 When Troy, or Argos, the dire scene affords,
 Or Creon's hall laments its guilty lords.
 Nor always city-pent, or pent at home, 50
 I dwell ; but when spring calls me forth to roam,
 Expatiate in our proud suburban shades
 Of branching elm that never sun pervades.
 Here many a virgin troop I may descry,
 Like stars of mildest influence, gliding by.
 Oh forms divine ! Oh looks that might inspire
 Even Jove himself, grown old, with young desire !
 Oft have I gazed on gem-surpassing eyes,
 Outsparkling every star that gilds the skies,
 Necks whiter than the ivory arm bestowed 60
 By Jove on Pelops, or the Milky Road !
 Bright locks, Love's golden snare ! these falling low,
 Those playing wanton o'er the graceful brow !
 Cheeks too, more winning sweet than after shower
 Adonis turned to Flora's favourite flower !
 Yield, heroines, yield, and ye who shared the embrace
 Of Jupiter in ancient times, give place !
 Give place, ye turbaned fair of Persia's coast !
 And ye, not less renowned, Assyria's boast !
 Submit, ye nymphs of Greece ! ye, once the bloom 70
 Of Ilion ! and all ye of haughty Rome
 Who swept, of old, her theatres with trains
 Redundant, and still live in classic strains !
 To British damsels beauty's palm is due ;
 Aliens ! to follow them is fame for you.
 O city, founded by Dardanian hands,
 Whose towering front the circling realms commands,

Too blest abode ! no loveliness we see
 In all the earth but it abounds in thee.
 The virgin multitude that daily meets,
 Radiant with gold and beauty, in thy streets
 Outnumbers all her train of starry fires
 With which Diana gilds thy lofty spires.
 Fame says that wafted hither by her doves,
 With all her host of quiver-bearing loves,
 Venus, preferring Paphian scenes no more,
 Has fixed her empire on thy nobler shore.
 But, lest the sightless boy inforce my stay,
 I leave these happy walls while yet I may.
 Immortal moly shall secure my heart
 From all the sorcery of Circæan art,
 And I will e'en repass Cam's reedy pools
 To face once more the warfare of the schools.
 Meanwhile accept this trifle ! rhymes though few,
 Yet such as prove thy Friend's remembrance true !

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ELEGY II

ON THE DEATH OF THE UNIVERSITY BEDEL AT CAMBRIDGE

COMPOSED BY MILTON IN THE SEVENTEENTH YEAR OF HIS AGE

THEE, whose refulgent staff and summons clear
 Minerva's flock long time was wont to obey,
 Although thyself a herald famous here,
 The last of heralds, Death, has snatched away.
 He calls on all alike, nor even deigns
 To spare the office that himself sustains.

Thy locks were whiter than the plumes displayed
 By Leda's paramour in ancient time,
 But thou wast worthy ne'er to have decayed,
 Or Æson-like to know a second prime,
 Worthy, for whom some goddess should have won
 New life, oft kneeling to Apollo's son.

Commissioned to convene with hasty call
 The gownèd tribes, how graceful wouldst thou stand !
 So stood Cyllenius erst in Priam's hall,
 Wing-footed messenger of Jove's command ;
 And so Eurybates, when he addressed
 To Peleus' son Atrides' proud behest.

Dread queen of sepulchres ! whose rigorous laws
 And watchful eyes run through the realms below ;
 Oh, oft too adverse to Minerva's cause,
 Too often to the Muse not less a foe,
 Choose meaner marks, and with more equal aim
 Pierce useless drones, earth's burden and its shame !

Flow, therefore, tears for him, from every eye ;
 All ye disciples of the Muses, weep !
 Assembling all in robes of sable dye,
 Around his bier, lament his endless sleep !
 And let complaining Elegy rehearse
 In every school her sweetest, saddest verse.

ELEGY III

ON THE DEATH OF THE BISHOP OF WINCHESTER

COMPOSED IN THE AUTHOR'S SEVENTEENTH YEAR

SILENT I sat, dejected, and alone,
 Making in thought the public woes my own,
 When, first, arose the image in my breast
 Of England's suffering by that scourge, the Pest !
 How Death, his funeral torch and scythe in hand,
 Entering the lordliest mansions of the land,
 Has laid the gem-illumined palace low,
 And levelled tribes of nobles at a blow.
 I next deplored the famed fraternal pair
 Too soon to ashes turned and empty air !
 The heroes next whom snatched into the skies
 All Belgia saw and followed with her sighs ;
 But thee far most I mourned, regretted most,
 Winton's chief shepherd and her worthiest boast !
 Poured out in tears I thus complaining said :
 " Death, next in power to him who rules the dead !
 " Is't not enough that all the woodlands yield
 " To thy fell force, and every verdant field ;
 " That lilies, at one noisome blast of thine,
 " And even the Cyprian queen's own roses, pine ;
 " That oaks themselves, although the running rill
 " Suckle their roots, must wither at thy will ;
 " That all the winged nations, even those
 " Whose heaven-directed flight the future shows,

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" And all the beasts, that in dark forests stray,
 " And all the herds of Proteus, are thy prey ?
 " Ah, envious ! armed with powers so unconfined
 " Why stain thy hands with blood of human kind ?
 " Why take delight, with darts that never roam,
 " To chase a heaven-born spirit from her home ? "

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While thus I mourned, the star of evening stood,
 Now newly risen, above the western flood,
 And Phœbus from his morning goal again
 Had reached the gulfs of the Iberian main.
 I wished repose, and on my couch reclined
 Took early rest, to night and sleep resigned :
 When—Oh for words to paint what I beheld !—
 I seemed to wander in a spacious field,
 Where all the champaign glowed with purple light
 Like that of sunrise on the mountain height ;
 Flowers over all the field, of every hue
 That ever Iris wore, luxuriant grew,
 Nor Chloris, with whom amorous zephyrs play,
 E'er dressed Alcinous' garden half so gay.
 A silver current, like the Tagus, rolled
 O'er golden sands, but sands of purer gold ;
 With dewy airs Favonius fanned the flowers,
 With airs awakened under rosy bowers :
 Such, poets feign, irradiated all o'er
 The sun's abode on India's utmost shore.

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While I that splendour and the mingled shade
 Of fruitful vines with wonder fixt surveyed,
 At once, with looks that beamed celestial grace,
 The seer of Winton stood before my face.
 His snowy vesture's hem descending low
 His golden sandals swept ; and pure as snow
 New-fallen shone the mitre on his brow.
 Where'er he trod a tremulous sweet sound
 Of gladness shook the flowery scene around :
 Attendant angels clap their starry wings,
 The trumpet shakes the sky, all æther rings ;
 Each chants his welcome, folds him to his breast,
 And thus a sweeter voice than all the rest :
 " Ascend, my son ! thy Father's kingdom share !
 " My son ! henceforth be freed from every care ! "

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So spake the voice, and at its tender close
 With psaltry's sound the angelic band arose ;
 Then night retired, and, chased by dawning day,
 The visionary bliss passed all away.
 I mourned my banished sleep, with fond concern ;
 Frequent to me may dreams like this return !

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ELEGY IV

TO HIS TUTOR, THOMAS YOUNG

CHAPLAIN TO THE ENGLISH FACTORY AT HAMBURGH

WRITTEN IN THE AUTHOR'S EIGHTEENTH YEAR

HENCE, my epistle—skim the deep—fly o'er
 Yon smooth expanse to the Teutonic shore !
 Haste—lest a friend should grieve for thy delay—
 And the gods grant that nothing thwart thy way !
 I will myself invoke the king who binds
 In his Sicanian echoing vault the winds,
 With Doris and her nymphs, and all the throng
 Of azure gods, to speed thee safe along.
 But rather to ensure thy happier haste,
 Ascend Medea's chariot if thou mayst ;
 Or that whence young Triptolemus of yore
 Descended welcome on the Scythian shore.
 The sands, that line the German coast, descried,
 To opulent Hamburga turn aside,
 So called, if legendary fame be true,
 From Hama, whom a club-armed Cimbrian slew.
 There lives, deep-learn'd and primitively just,
 A faithful steward of his Christian trust,
 My friend, and favourite inmate of my heart,
 That now is forced to want its better part.
 What mountains now, and seas, alas, how wide,
 From me this other, dearer self divide,
 Dear as the sage renowned for moral truth
 To the prime spirit of the Attic youth !
 Dear as the Stagirite to Ammon's son,
 His pupil, who disdained the world he won !
 Nor so did Chiron, or so Phœnix shine
 In young Achilles' eyes, as he in mine.
 First led by him through sweet Aonian shade,
 Each sacred haunt of Pindus I surveyed ;
 And favoured by the Muse, whom I implored,
 Thrice on my lip the hallowed stream I poured.
 But thrice the sun's resplendent chariot, rolled
 To Aries, has new-tinged his fleece with gold,
 And Chloris twice has dressed the meadows gay,
 And twice has summer parched their bloom away,
 Since last delighted on his looks I hung
 Or my ear drank the music of his tongue :

Fly, therefore, and surpass the tempest's speed ;
 Aware thyself that there is urgent need !
 Him, entering, thou shalt haply seated see
 Beside his spouse, his infants on his knee ;
 Or turning, page by page, with studious look,
 Some bulky Father, or God's holy book ;
 Or ministering (which is his weightiest care)
 To Christ's assembled flock their heavenly fare.
 Give him, whatever his employment be,
 Such gratulation as he claims from me ;
 And, with a downcast eye, and carriage meek,
 Addressing him, forget not thus to speak !

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" If, compassed round with arms, thou canst attend
 To verse, verse greets thee from a distant friend.
 Long due, and late, I left the English shore ;
 But make me welcome for that cause the more !
 Such from Ulysses, his chaste wife to cheer,
 The slow epistle came, though late, sincere.
 But wherefore this ? why palliate I the deed,
 For which the culprit's self could hardly plead ?
 Self-charged, and self-condemned, his proper part
 He feels neglected, with an aching heart ;
 But thou forgive : delinquents, who confess
 And pray forgiveness, merit anger less ;
 From timid foes the lion turns away,
 Nor yawns upon or rends a crouching prey ;
 Even pike-wielding Thracians learn to spare,
 Won by soft influence of a suppliant prayer ;
 And Heaven's dread thunderbolt arrested stands
 By a cheap victim, and uplifted hands.
 Long had he wished to write, but was withheld,
 And writes at last by love alone compelled ;
 For Fame, too often true when she alarms,
 Reports thy neighbouring fields a scene of arms ;
 Thy city against fierce besiegers barred,
 And all the Saxon chiefs for fight prepared,
 Enyo wastes thy country wide around,
 And saturates with blood the tainted ground ;
 Mars rests contented in his Thrace no more,
 But goads his steeds to fields of German gore ;
 The ever-verdant olive fades and dies,
 And Peace, the trumpet-hating goddess, flies,
 Flies from that earth which Justice long had left,
 And leaves the world of its last guard bereft.

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" Thus horror girds thee round. Meantime alone
 Thou dwell'st, and helpless, in a soil unknown ;
 Poor, and receiving from a foreign hand

The aid denied thee in thy native land.
 O ruthless country, and unfeeling more
 Than thy own billow-beaten chalky shore !
 Leavest thou to foreign care the worthies given
 By Providence to guide thy steps to heaven ? 90
 His ministers, commissioned to proclaim
 Eternal blessings in a Saviour's name ?
 Ah, then most worthy, with a soul unfed,
 In Stygian night to lie for ever dead !
 So once the venerable Tishbite strayed
 An exiled fugitive from shade to shade,
 When, flying Ahab and his fury wife,
 In lone Arabian wilds he sheltered life ;
 So from Philippi wandered forth forlorn
 Cilician Paul, with sounding scourges torn ; 100
 And Christ himself so left, and trod no more,
 The thankless Gergesenes' forbidden shore.

" But thou take courage ! strive against despair !
 Quake not with dread, nor nourish anxious care !
 Grim war indeed on every side appears,
 And thou art menaced by a thousand spears ;
 Yet none shall drink thy blood, or shall offend
 Even the defenceless bosom of my friend.
 For thee the Ægis of thy God shall hide,
 Jehovah's self shall combat on thy side : 110
 The same, who vanquished under Sion's towers,
 At silent midnight, all Assyria's powers ;
 The same, who overthrew in ages past
 Damascus' sons that laid Samaria waste !
 Their king he filled and them with fatal fears
 By mimic sounds of clarions in their ears,
 Of hoofs, and wheels, and neighings from afar,
 Of clashing armour, and the din of war.

" Thou, therefore (as the most afflicted may),
 Still hope, and triumph o'er thy evil day ! 120
 Look forth, expecting happier times to come,
 And to enjoy, once more, thy native home ! "

ELEGY V

ON THE APPROACH OF SPRING

WRITTEN IN THE AUTHOR'S TWENTIETH YEAR

TIME, never wandering from his annual round,
 Bids Zephyr breathe the Spring, and thaw the ground ;
 Bleak Winter flies, new verdure clothes the plain,
 And Earth assumes her transient youth again.

Dream I, or also to the Spring belong
 Increase of genius, and new powers of song?
 Spring gives them, and, how strange soe'er it seem,
 Impels me now to some harmonious theme.
 Castalia's fountain and the forkèd hill,
 By day, by night, my raptured fancy fill;
 My bosom burns and heaves, I hear within
 A sacred sound that prompts me to begin.
 Lo, Phœbus comes! with his bright hair he blends
 The radiant laurel wreath; Phœbus descends:
 I mount, and undepressed by cumbrous clay
 Through cloudy regions win my easy way;
 Rapt, through poetic shadowy haunts I fly;
 The shrines all open to my dauntless eye,
 My spirit searches all the realms of light,
 And no Tartarean gulfs elude my sight.
 But this ecstatic trance—this glorious storm
 Of inspiration—what will it perform?
 Spring claims the verse that with his influence glows,
 And shall be paid with what himself bestows.

Thou, veiled with opening foliage, lead'st the throng
 Of feathered minstrels, Philomel! in song;
 Let us, in concert, to the season sing,
 Civic and sylvan heralds of the Spring!

With notes triumphant Spring's approach declare!
 To Spring, ye Muses, annual tribute bear!
 The Orient left and Æthiopia's plains,
 The Sun now northward turns his golden reins;
 Night creeps not now, yet rules with gentle sway,
 And drives her dusky horrors swift away;
 Now less fatigued, on his ethereal plain
 Boötes follows his celestial wain;
 And now the radiant sentinels above,
 Less numerous, watch around the courts of Jove,
 For, with the night, force, ambush, slaughter fly,
 And no gigantic guilt alarms the sky.
 Now haply says some shepherd, while he views,
 Recumbent on a rock, the reddening dews,
 This night, this surely, Phœbus missed the Fair,
 Who stops his chariot by her amorous care.
 Cynthia, delighted by the morning's glow,
 Speeds to the woodland, and resumes her bow;
 Resigns her beams, and, glad to disappear,
 Blesses his aid who shortens her career.
 Come—Phœbus cries—Aurora come—too late
 Thou lingerest, slumbering with thy withered mate!
 Leave him, and to Hymettus' top repair!

Thy darling Cephalus expects thee there.
The goddess with a blush her love betrays,
But mounts, and, driving rapidly, obeys.
Earth now desires thee, Phœbus ! and to engage
Thy warm embrace, casts off the guise of age ;
Desires thee, and deserves ; for who so sweet,
When her rich bosom courts thy genial heat ?
Her breath imparts to every breeze that blows
Arabia's harvest, and the Paphian rose. 60
Her lofty front she diadems around
• With sacred pines, like Ops on Ida crowned ;
Her dewy locks with various flowers new-blown
She interweaves, various, and all her own,
For Proserpine, in such a wreath attired,
Tænarian Dis himself with love inspired.
Fear not, lest, cold and coy, the nymph refuse !
Herself, with all her sighing Zephyrs, sues ;
Each courts thee, fanning soft his scented wing,
And all her groves with warbled wishes ring. 70
Nor, unendowed and indigent, aspires
The amorous Earth to engage thy warm desires,
But, rich in balmy drugs, assists thy claim,
Divine Physician, to that glorious name.
If splendid recompense, if gifts can move
Desire in thee (gifts often purchase love),
She offers all the wealth her mountains hide,
And all that rests beneath the boundless tide.
How oft, when headlong from the heavenly steep
She sees thee plunging in the western deep, 80
How oft she cries—" Ah Phœbus ! why repair
Thy wasted force, why seek refreshment there ?
Can Tethys win thee ? wherefore shouldst thou lave
A face so fair in her unpleasant wave ?
Come, seek my green retreats, and rather choose
To cool thy tresses in my crystal dew,
The grassy turf shall yield thee sweeter rest ;
Come, lay thy evening glories on my breast,
And breathing fresh through many a humid rose
Soft whispering airs shall lull thee to repose ! 90
No fears I feel like Semele to die,
Nor lest thy burning wheels approach too nigh,—
For thou canst govern them ; here therefore rest,
And lay thy evening glories on my breast !"

Thus breathes the wanton Earth her amorous flame,
And all her countless offspring feel the same ;
For Cupid now through every region strays !
Brightening his faded fires with solar rays ;

His new-strung bow sends forth a deadlier sound,
 And his new-pointed shafts more deeply wound ; 100
 Nor Dian's self escapes him now untried,
 Nor even Vesta at her altar-side.
 His mother too repairs her beauty's wane,
 And seems sprung newly from the deep again,
 Exulting youths the Hymeneal sing,
 With Hymen's name roofs, rocks, and valleys ring ;
 He, new-attired, and by the season drest,
 Proceeds, all fragrant, in his saffron vest,
 Now, many a golden-cinctured virgin roves
 To taste the pleasures of the fields and groves ; 110
 All wish, and each alike, some favourite youth
 Hers in the bonds of Hymeneal truth.
 Now pipes the shepherd through his reeds again,
 Nor Phillis wants a song that suits the strain ;
 With songs the seaman hails the starry sphere,
 And dolphins rise from the abyss to hear ;
 Jove feels himself the season, sports again
 With his fair spouse, and banquets all his train.
 Now too the Satyrs, in the dusk of eve,
 Their mazy dance through flowery meadows weave, 120
 And neither god nor goat, but both in kind,
 Silvanus, wreathed with cypress, skips behind.
 The Dryads leave their hollow sylvan cells
 To roam the banks and solitary dells ;
 Pan riots now, and from his amorous chafe
 Ceres and Cybele seem hardly safe ;
 And Faunus, all on fire to reach the prize,
 In chase of some enticing Oread flies ;
 She bounds before, but fears too swift a bound,
 And hidden lies, but wishes to be found. 130
 Our shades entice the Immortals from above,
 And some kind power presides o'er every grove ;
 And long, ye Powers, o'er every grove" preside,
 For all is safe and blest, where ye abide !
 Return, O Jove ! the age of gold restore—
 Why choose to dwell where storms and thunders roar ?
 At least, thou, Phœbus ! moderate thy speed !
 Let not the vernal hours too swift proceed,
 Command rough Winter back, nor yield the pole
 Too soon to Night's encroaching, long control ! 140

ELEGY VI

TO CHARLES DEODATI

Who, while he spent his Christmas in the country, sent the Author a poetical Epistle, in which he requested that his verses, if not so good as usual, might be excused on account of the many feasts to which his friends had invited him, and which would not allow him leisure to finish them as he wished.

WITH no rich viands overcharged, I send
 Health, which perchance you want, my pampered friend;
 But wherefore should thy muse tempt mine away
 From what she loves, from darkness into day?
 Art thou desirous to be told how well
 I love thee, and in verse? verse cannot tell,
 For verse has bounds, and must in measure move
 But neither bounds nor measure knows my love.
 How pleasant, in thy lines described, appear
 December's harmless sports and rural cheer!
 French spirits kindling with cærulean fires,
 And all such gambols as the time inspires!

10

Think not that wine against good verse offends;
 The Muse and Bacchus have been always friends,
 Nor Phœbus blushes sometimes to be found
 With ivy, rather than with laurel, crowned.
 The Nine themselves oft-times have joined the song
 And revels of the Bacchanalian throng;
 Not even Ovid could in Scythian air
 Sing sweetly—why? no vine would flourish there.
 What in brief numbers sung Anacreon's muse?
 Wine, and the rose that sparkling wine bedews.
 Pindar with Bacchus glows—his every line
 Breathes the rich fragrance of inspiring wine,
 While, with loud crash o'erturned, the chariot lies
 And brown with dust the fiery courser flies.
 The Roman lyrist steeped in wine his lays,
 So sweet in Glycera's and Chloe's praise.
 Now too the plenteous feast and mantling bowl
 Nourish the vigour of thy sprightly soul;
 The flowing goblet makes thy numbers flow,
 And casks not wine alone, but verse bestow.
 Thus Phœbus favours, and the arts attend,
 Whom Bacchus, and whom Ceres, both befriend:
 What wonder, then, thy verses are so sweet,
 In which these triple powers so kindly meet?
 The lute now also sounds, with gold inwrought,

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And touched with flying fingers nicely taught ;
 In tapestried halls, high-roofed, the sprightly lyre
 Directs the dances of the virgin choir.

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If dull repletion fright the muse away,
 Sights, gay as these, may more invite her stay :
 And, trust me, while the ivory keys resound,
 Fair damsels sport, and perfumes steam around,
 Apollo's influence, like ethereal flame,
 Shall animate, at once, thy glowing frame,
 And all the Muse shall rush into thy breast,
 By love and music's blended powers possess.
 For numerous powers light Elegy befriend,
 Hear her sweet voice, and at her call attend ;
 Her Bacchus, Ceres, Venus, all approve,
 And, with his blushing mother, gentle Love.

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Hence to such bards we grant the copious use
 Of banquets, and the vine's delicious juice.
 But they, who demi-gods and heroes praise,
 And feats performed in Jove's more youthful days,
 Who now the counsels of high heaven explore,
 Now shades, that echo the Cerberean roar,
 Simply let these, like him of Samos, live ;
 Let herbs to them a bloodless banquet give ;
 In beechen goblets let their beverage shine,
 Cool from the crystal spring, their sober wine !
 Their youth should pass in innocence, secure
 From stain licentious, and in manners pure,
 Pure as the priest, when robed in white he stands,
 The fresh lustration ready in his hands.

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Thus Linus lived, and thus, as poets write,
 Tiresias, wiser for his loss of sight ;
 Thus exiled Chalcas, thus the bard of Thrace,
 Melodious tamer of the savage race ;
 Thus, trained by temperance, Homer led, of yore,
 His chief of Ithaca from shore to shore,
 Through magic Circe's monster-peopled reign,
 And shoals insidious with the Siren strain ;
 And through the realms where grizly spectres dwell,
 Whose tribes he fettered in a gory spell.
 For these are sacred bards, and, from above,
 Drink large infusions from the mind of Jove.

70

Wouldst thou, (perhaps 'tis hardly worth thine ear)
 Wouldst thou be told my occupation here ?
 The promised King of peace employs my pen,
 The eternal covenant made for guilty men,
 The new-born Deity, with infant cries
 Filling the sordid hovel, where he lies ;

80

The hymning Angels, and the herald star,
That led the Wise, who sought him from afar,
And idols on their own unhallowed shore
Dashed, at his birth, to be revered no more !

This theme on reeds of Albion I rehearse :
The dawn of that blest day inspired the verse ;
Verse that, reserved in secret, shall attend
Thy candid voice, my critic, and my friend !

90

ELEGY VII

COMPOSED IN THE AUTHOR'S NINETEENTH YEAR

As yet a stranger to the gentle fires
That Amathusia's smiling queen inspires,
Not seldom I derided Cupid's darts,
And scorned his claim to rule all human hearts.
"Go, child," I said, "transfix the timorous dove !
"An easy conquest suits an infant love ;
"Enslave the sparrow, for such prize shall be
"Sufficient triumph to a chief like thee !
"Why aim thy idle arms at human kind ?
"Thy shafts prevail not 'gainst the noble mind."

10

The Cyprian heard, and, kindling into ire,
(None kindles sooner) burned with double fire.

It was the spring, and newly-risen day
Peeped o'er the hamlets on the first of May ;
My eyes, too tender for the blaze of light,
Still sought the shelter of retiring night,
When Love approached : in painted plumes arrayed
The insidious god his rattling darts betrayed,
Nor less his infant features, and the sly
Sweet intimations of his threatening eye.
Such the Sigeian boy is seen above,
Filling the goblet for imperial Jove ;
Such he, on whom the nymphs bestowed their charms,
Hylas, who perished in a Naiad's arms.
Angry he seemed, yet graceful in his ire,
And added threats, not destitute of fire.

20

"My power," he said, "by others' pain alone
"Twere best to learn ; now learn it by thy own !
"With those who feel my power that power attest,
"And in thy anguish be my sway confest !
"I vanquished Phœbus, though returning vain
"From his new triumph o'er the Python slain,

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"And when he thinks on Daphne, even he
 "Will yield the prize of archery to me.
 "A dart less true the Parthian horseman sped,
 "Behind him killed, and conquered as he fled :
 "Less true the expert Cydonian, and less true
 "The youth whose shaft his latent Procris slew.
 "Vanquished by me see huge Orion bend,
 "By me Alcides, and Alcides' friend. 40
 "At me should Jove himself a bolt design,
 "His bosom first should bleed transfixt by mine.
 "But all thy doubts this shaft will best explain,
 "Nor shall it teach thee with a trivial pain.
 "Thy muse, vain youth ! shall not thy peace ensure,
 "Nor Phœbus' serpent yield thy wound a cure."

He spoke, and, waving a bright shaft in air
 Sought the warm bosom of the Cyprian fair.

That thus a child should bluster in my ear
 Provoked my laughter, more than moved my fear. 50
 I shunned not, therefore, public haunts, but strayed
 Careless in city or suburban shade.

And, passing and repassing, nymphs that moved
 With grace divine beheld where'er I roved.
 Bright shone the vernal day, with double blaze,
 As beauty gave new force to Phœbus' rays.
 By no grave scruples checked, I freely eyed
 The dangerous show, rash youth my only guide,
 And many a look of many a Fair unknown
 Met full, unable to control my own, 60
 But one I marked (then peace forsook my breast)—
 One—oh how far superior to the rest !
 What lovely features ! such the Cyprian queen
 Herself might wish, and Juno wish her mien.
 The very nymph was she, whom, when I dared
 His arrows, Love had even then prepared ;
 Nor was himself remote, nor unsupplied
 With torch well-trimmed and quiver at his side !
 Now to her lips he clung, her eyelids now,
 Then settled on her cheeks, or on her brow : 70
 And with a thousand wounds from every part
 Pierced, and transpierced, my undefended heart.
 A fever, new to me, of fierce desire
 Now seized my soul, and I was all on fire ;
 But she, the while, whom only I adore,
 Was gone, and vanished, to appear no more.
 In silent sadness I pursue my way ;
 I pause, I turn, proceed, yet wish to stay,
 And while I follow her in thought, bemoan,

With tears, my soul's delight so quickly flown.
 When Jove had hurled him to the Lemnian coast,
 So Vulcan sorrowed for Olympus lost,
 And so Œclides, sinking into night,
 From the deep gulf looked up to distant light.

80

Wretch that I am, what hopes for me remain,
 Who cannot cease to love, yet love in vain?
 Oh could I once, once more behold the Fair,
 Speak to her, tell her, of the pangs I bear,
 Perhaps she is not adamant, would show
 Perhaps some pity at my tale of woe.

90

O inauspicious flame!—'tis mine to prove
 A matchless instance of disastrous love.
 Ah spare me, gentle Power!—If such thou be,
 Let not thy deeds and nature disagree.
 Spare me, and I will worship at no shrine
 With vow and sacrifice, save only thine.
 Now I revere thy fires, thy bow, thy darts.
 Now own thee sovereign of all human hearts.
 Remove! no—grant me still this raging woe!
 Sweet is the wretchedness that lovers know:
 But pierce hereafter (should I chance to see
 One destined mine) at once both her and me.

100

Such were the trophies, that, in earlier days,
 By vanity seduced, I toiled to raise,
 Studious, yet indolent, and urged by youth,
 That worst of teachers! from the ways of truth;
 Till learning taught me, in his shady bower,
 To quit Love's servile yoke, and spurn his power.
 Then, on a sudden, the fierce flame supprest,
 A frost continual settled on my breast,
 Whence Cupid fears his flames extinct to see,
 And Venus dreads a Diomede in me.

110

EPIGRAMS

ON THE INVENTOR OF GUNS

PRAISE in old times the sage Prometheus won,
 Who stole æthereal radiance from the sun;
 But greater he, whose bold invention strove
 To emulate the fiery bolts of Jove.

The Poems on the subject of the Gunpowder Treason I have not translated, both because the matter of them is unpleasant, and because they are written with an asperity, which, however it might be warranted in Milton's day, would be extremely unseasonable now.—C.

TO LEONORA SINGING AT ROME

[I have translated only two of the three poetical compliments addressed to Leonora, as they appear to me far superior to what I have omitted.—C.]

ANOTHER Leonora once inspired
 Tasso, with fatal love to frenzy fired ;
 But how much happier, lived he now, were he,
 Pierced with whatever pangs for love of thee !
 Since could he hear that heavenly voice of thine,
 With Adriana's lute of sound divine,
 Fiercer than Pentheus' though his eye might roll,
 Or idiot apathy benumb his soul,
 You still with medicinal sounds might cheer
 His senses wandering in a blind career ;
 And, sweetly breathing through his wounded breast,
 Charm, with soul-soothing song, his thoughts to rest

TO THE SAME

NAPLES, too credulous, ah ! boast no more
 The sweet-voiced Siren buried on thy shore,
 That, when Parthenope deceased, she gave
 Her sacred dust to a Chalcidic grave ;
 For still she lives, but has exchanged the hoarse
 Pausilipo for Tiber's placid course,
 Where, idol of all Rome, she now in chains
 Of magic song both gods and men detains.

THE COTTAGER AND HIS LANDLORD

A FABLE

A PEASANT to his lord paid yearly court,
 Presenting pippins of so rich a sort
 That he, displeased to have a part alone,
 Removed the tree, that all might be his own.
 The tree, too old to travel, though before
 So fruitful, withered, and would yield no more.
 The squire, perceiving all his labour void,
 Cursed his own pains so foolishly employed,

And "Oh," he cried, "that I had lived content
"With tribute, small indeed, but kindly meant!
"My avarice has expensive proved to me,
"Has cost me both my pippins and my tree."

TO CHRISTINA, QUEEN OF SWEDEN

WRITTEN IN CROMWELL'S NAME, AND SENT WITH THE
PROTECTOR'S PICTURE

CHRISTINA, maiden of heroic mien!
Star of the North! of northern stars the queen!
Behold what wrinkles I have earned, and how
The iron casque still chafes my veteran brow,
While, following Fate's dark footsteps, I fulfil
The dictates of a hardy people's will.
But softened, in thy sight, my looks appear.
Not to all queens or kings alike severe.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

ON THE DEATH OF THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

A PHYSICIAN

LEARN, ye nations of the earth,
The condition of your birth;
Now be taught your feeble state;
Know, that all must yield to Fate!

If the mournful rover, Death,
Say but once—"Resign your breath!"
Vainly of escape you dream,
You must pass the Stygian stream.

Could the stoutest overcome
Death's assault, and baffle doom,
Hercules had both withstood,
Undiseased by Nessus' blood.

Ne'er had Hector pressed the plain
By a trick of Pallas slain,
Nor the chief to Jove allied
By Achilles' phantom died.

Could enchantments life prolong,
Circe, saved by magic song,
Still had lived, and equal skill
Had preserved Medea still.

Dwelt in herbs and drugs a power
To avert man's destined hour,
Learn'd Machaon should have known
Doubtless to avert his own ;

Chiron had survived the smart
Of the hydra-tainted dart,
And Jove's bolt had been, with ease,
Foiled by Asclepiades.

Thou too, sage ! of whom forlorn
Helicon and Cirrha mourn,
Still hadst filled thy princely place,
Regent of the gownèd race ;

Hadst advanced to higher fame
Still thy much-ennobled name,
Nor in Charon's skiff explored
The Tartarean gulf abhorred.

But resentful Proserpine,
Jealous of thy skill divine,
Snapping short thy vital thread,
Thee too numbered with the dead.

Wise and good ! untroubled be
The green turf that covers thee !
Thence, in gay profusion, grow
All the sweetest flowers that blow !

Pluto's consort bid thee rest !
Æacus pronounce thee blest,
To her home thy shade consign,
Make Elysium ever thine !

ON THE DEATH OF THE BISHOP OF ELY

WRITTEN IN THE AUTHOR'S SEVENTEENTH YEAR

My lids with grief were tumid yet.
And still my sullied cheek was wet
With briny tears, profusely shed
For venerable Winton dead,
When Fame, whose tales of saddest sound,
Alas ! are ever truest found,
The news through all our cities spread
Of yet another mitred head
By ruthless Fate to death consigned—
Ely, the honour of his kind !

At once a storm of passion heaved
My boiling bosom ; much I grieved,
But more I raged, at every breath
Devoting Death himself to death.
With less revenge did Naso teem,
When hated Ibis was his theme ;
With less Archilochus denied
The lovely Greek, his promised bride.
But lo ! while thus I execrate,
Incensed, the minister of fate,
Wondrous accents, soft, yet clear,
Wafted on the gale I hear.

“ Ah, much deluded ! lay aside
“ Thy threats and anger misapplied !
“ Art not afraid with sounds like these
“ To offend whom thou canst not appease ?
“ Death is not (wherefore dream'st thou thus ?)
“ The son of Night and Erebus ;
“ Nor was of fell Erinnyes born
“ On gulfs where Chaos rules forlorn :
“ But, sent from God, His presence leaves
“ To gather home his ripened sheaves,
“ To call encumbered souls away
“ From fleshly bonds to boundless day,
“ (As when the winged Hours excite
“ And summon forth the morning light)
“ And each to convoy to her place
“ Before the Eternal Father's face.
“ But not the wicked :—them, severe
“ Yet just, from all their pleasures here
“ He hurries to the realms below,

"Terrific realms of penal woe !
 "Myself no sooner heard his call,
 "Than, 'scaping through my prison wall,
 "I bade adieu to bolts and bars,
 "And soared, with angels, to the stars,
 "Like him of old, to whom 'twas given
 "To mount on fiery wheels to heaven.
 "Boötes' waggon, slow with cold,
 "Appalled me not ; nor to behold
 "The sword that vast Orion draws,
 "Or even the Scorpion's horrid claws.
 "Beyond the Sun's bright orb I fly,
 "And far beneath my feet descry
 "Night's dread goddess, seen with awe,
 "Whom her winged dragons draw.
 "Thus, ever wondering at my speed,
 "Augmented still as I proceed,
 "I pass the planetary sphere,
 "The Milky Way—and now appear
 "Heaven's crystal battlements, her door
 "Of massy pearl, and emerald floor.
 "But here I cease. For never can
 "The tongue of once a mortal man
 "In suitable description trace
 "The pleasures of that happy place ;
 "Suffice it, that those joys divine
 "Are all, and all for ever, mine !"

NATURE UNIMPAIRED BY TIME

AH, how the human mind wearies herself
 With her own wanderings, and, involved in gloom
 Impenetrable, speculates amiss !
 Measuring, in her folly, things divine
 By human ; laws inscribed on adamant
 By laws of man's device, and counsels fixt
 For ever by the hours that pass and die.

How ?—shall the face of Nature then be ploughed
 Into deep wrinkles, and shall years at last
 On the great parent fix a sterile curse ?
 Shall even she confess old age, and halt,
 And, palsy-smitten, shake her starry brows ?
 Shall foul Antiquity with rust, and drought,
 And famine, vex the radiant worlds above ?

Shall Time's unsated maw crave and ingulf
 The very heavens that regulate his flight ?
 And was the Sire of all able to fence
 His works and to uphold the circling worlds,
 But, through improvident and heedless haste,
 Let slip the occasion ?—So, then, all is lost— 20
 And in some future evil hour yon arch
 Shall crumble and come thundering down, the poles
 Jar in collision, the Olympian king
 Fall with his throne, and Pallas, holding forth
 The terrors of the Gorgon shield in vain,
 Shall rush to the abyss, like Vulcan hurled
 Down into Lemnos, through the gate of heaven.
 Thou also, with precipitated wheels,
 Phœbus, thy own son's fall shall imitate,
 With hideous ruin shalt impress the deep 30
 Suddenly, and the flood shall reek and hiss
 At the extinction of the lamp of day.
 Then too shall Hæmus, cloven to his base,
 Be shattered, and the huge Ceraunian hills,
 Once weapons of Tartarean Dis, immersed
 In Erebus, shall fill Himself with fear.

No. The Almighty Father surer laid
 His deep foundations, and, providing well
 For the event of all, the scales of fate
 Suspended in just equipoise, and bade 40
 His universal works, from age to age,
 One tenor hold, perpetual, undisturbed.

Hence the prime mover wheels itself about
 Continual, day by day, and with it bears
 In social measure swift the heavens around.
 Not tardier now is Saturn than of old,
 Nor radiant less the burning casque of Mars.
 Phœbus, his vigour unimpaired, still shows
 The effulgence of his youth, nor needs the god
 A downward course that he may warm the vales ; 50
 But, ever rich in influence, runs his road,
 Sign after sign, through all the heavenly zone.
 Beautiful as at first ascends the star
 From odoriferous Ind, whose office is
 To gather home betimes the ethereal flock,
 To pour them o'er the skies again at eve,
 And to discriminate the night and day.
 Still Cynthia's changeful horn waxes and wanes
 Alternate, and, with arms extended still,
 She welcomes to her breast her brother's beams. 60
 Nor have the elements deserted yet

Their functions : thunder, with as loud a stroke
 As erst, smites through the rocks and scatters them.
 The East still howls, still the relentless North
 Invades the shuddering Scythian, still he breathes
 The winter, and still rolls the storms along.
 The king of ocean, with his wonted force,
 Beats on Pelorus ; o'er the deep is heard
 The hoarse alarm of Triton's sounding shell ;
 Nor swim the monsters of the Ægean sea
 In shallows, or beneath diminished waves.
 Thou, too, thy ancient vegetative power
 Enjoyest, O earth ! Narcissus still is sweet,
 And, Phœbus ! still thy favourite, and still
 Thy favourite, Cytherea ! both retain
 Their beauty ; nor the mountains, ore-enriched
 For punishment of man, with purer gold
 Teemed ever, or with brighter gems the deep.
 Thus in unbroken series all proceeds ;
 And shall till, wide involving either pole
 And the immensity of yonder heaven,
 The final flames of destiny absorb
 The world, consumed in one enormous pyre !

70

80

ON THE PLATONIC IDEA

AS IT WAS UNDERSTOOD BY ARISTOTLE

YE sister powers, who o'er the sacred groves
 Preside, and thou, fair mother of them all,
 Mnemosyne ! and thou who, in thy grot
 Immense, reclined at leisure, hast in charge
 The archives and the ordinances of Jove,
 And dost record the festivals of heaven,
 Eternity !—inform us who is He,
 That great original by nature chosen
 To be the archetype of human kind,
 Unchangeable, immortal, with the poles
 Themselves coeval, one, yet everywhere,
 An image of the god who gave him being ?
 Twin-brother of the goddess born from Jove
 He dwells not in his father's mind, but, though
 Of common nature with ourselves, exists
 Apart, and occupies a local home.
 Whether, companion of the stars, he spend

10

Eternal ages, roaming at his will
 From sphere to sphere the tenfold heavens ; or dwell
 On the moon's side that nearest neighbours earth ; 20
 Or torpid on the banks of Lethe sit
 Among the multitude of souls ordained
 To flesh and blood, or whether (as may chance)
 That vast and giant model of our kind
 In some far distant region of this globe
 Sequestered stalk, with lifted head on high
 O'ertowering Atlas on whose shoulders rest
 The stars, terrific even to the gods.
 Never the Theban seer, whose blindness proved
 His best illumination, him beheld 30
 In secret vision : never him the son
 Of Pleione, amid the noiseless night
 Descending, to the prophet-choir revealed ;
 Him never knew the Assyrian priest, who yet
 The ancestry of Ninus chronicles,
 And Belus, and Osiris far-renowned ;
 Nor even thrice-great Hermes, although skilled
 So deep in mystery, to the worshippers
 Of Isis showed a prodigy like him.

And thou, who hast immortalised the shades 40
 Of Academus,—if the schools received
 This monster of the fancy first from thee,—
 Either recall at once the banished bards
 To thy republic, or, thyself evinced
 A wilder fabulist, go also forth.

TO HIS FATHER

ON that Pieria's spring would through my breast
 Pour its inspiring influence, and rush
 No rill, but rather an o'erflowing flood !
 That, for my venerable father's sake
 All meaner themes renounced, my muse, on wings
 Of duty borne, might reach a loftier strain.
 For thee, my father ! howsoe'er it please,
 She frames this slender work ; nor know I aught
 That may thy gifts more suitably requite ;
 Though to requite them suitably would ask 10
 Returns much nobler, and surpassing far
 The meagre stores of verbal gratitude :
 But, such as I possess, I send thee all.

This page presents thee in their full amount
 With thy son's treasures, and the sum is nought ;
 Nought, save the riches that from airy dreams
 In secret grottoes, and in laurel bowers,
 I have, by golden Clio's gift, acquired.

Verse is a work divine ; despise not thou
 Verse therefore, which evinces (nothing more) 20
 Man's heavenly source, and which, retaining still
 Some scintillations of Promethean fire,
 Bespeaks him animated from above.

The gods love verse ; the infernal powers themselves
 Confess the influence of verse, which stirs
 The lowest deep, and binds in triple chains
 Of adamant both Pluto and the Shades.

In verse the Delphic priestess, and the pale
 Tremulous Sibyl, make the future known ;

And he who sacrifices, on the shrine 30
 Hangs verse, both when he smites the threatening bull,
 And when he spreads his reeking entrails wide
 To scrutinize the fates enveloped there.

We too, ourselves, what time we seek again
 Our native skies, and one eternal Now
 Shall be the only measure of our being,
 Crowned all with gold, and chanting to the lyre
 Harmonious verse, shall range the courts above,
 And make the starry firmament resound.

And, even now, the fiery spirit pure 40
 That wheels yon circling orbs, directs, himself,
 Their mazy dance with melody of verse
 Unutterable, immortal, hearing which
 Huge Ophiuchus holds his hiss suppressed,
 Orion, softened, drops his ardent blade,
 And Atlas stands unconscious of his load.

Verse graced of old the feasts of kings, ere yet
 Luxurious dainties, destined to the gulf
 Immense of gluttony, were known, and ere
 Lyæus deluged yet the temperate board. 50

Then sat the bard a customary guest
 To share the banquet, and, his length of locks
 With beechen honours bound, proposed in verse
 The characters of heroes and their deeds
 To imitation ; sang of Chaos old,
 Of Nature's birth, of gods that crept in search
 Of acorns fallen, and of the thunder-bolt
 Not yet produced from Ætna's fiery cave.
 And what avails, at last, tune without voice,
 Devoid of matter ? Such may suit perhaps 60

The rural dance, but such was ne'er the song
Of Orpheus, whom the streams stood still to hear,
And the oaks followed. Not by chords alone
Well touched, but by resistless accents more,
To sympathetic tears the ghosts themselves
He moved: these praises to his verse he owes.

Nor thou persist, I pray thee, still to slight
The sacred Nine, and to imagine vain
And useless, powers, by whom inspired thyself
Art skilful to associate verse with airs
Harmonious, and to give the human voice
A thousand modulations, heir by right
Indisputable of Arion's fame.

70

Now say, what wonder is it if a son
Of thine delight in verse, if, so conjoined
In close affinity, we sympathise
In social arts, and kindred studies sweet?
Such distribution of himself to us
Was Phœbus' choice; thou hast thy gift, and I
Mine also, and between us we receive,
Father and son, the whole inspiring god.

80

No! howsoe'er the semblance thou assume
Of hate, thou hatest not the gentle Muse,
My father! for thou never badest me tread
The beaten path and broad that leads right on
To opulence, nor didst condemn thy son
To the insipid clamours of the bar,
To laws voluminous and ill observed;

But, wishing to enrich me more, to fill
My mind with treasure, led'st me far away
From city din to deep retreats, to banks
And streams Aonian, and with free consent
Didst place me happy at Apollo's side.

90

I speak not now, on more important themes
Intent, of common benefits and such
As nature bids, but of thy larger gifts,
My father! who, when I had opened once
The stores of Roman rhetoric, and learned
The full-toned language of the eloquent Greeks,
Whose lofty music graced the lips of Jove,
Thyself didst counsel me to add the flowers
That Gallia boasts, those too with which the smooth
Italian his degenerate speech adorns,
That witnesses his mixture with the Goth,
And Palestine's prophetic songs divine.
To sum the whole, whate'er the heaven contains,
The earth beneath it, and the air between,

100

The rivers and the restless deep, may all
 Prove intellectual gain to me, my wish
 Concurring with thy will ; science herself,
 All cloud removed, inclines her beauteous head,
 And offers me the lip, if, dull of heart,
 I shrink not and decline her gracious boon.

110

Go now and gather dross, ye sordid minds
 That covet it : what could my father more ?
 What more could Jove himself, unless he gave
 His own abode, the heaven in which he reigns ?
 More eligible gifts than these were not
 Apollo's to his son, had they been safe
 As they were insecure, who made the boy
 The world's vice-luminary, bade him rule
 The radiant chariot of the day, and bind
 To his young brows his own all-dazzling wreath ?
 I therefore, although last and least, my place
 Among the learned in the laurel grove
 Will hold, and where the conqueror's ivy twines,
 Henceforth exempt from the unlettered throng
 Profane, nor even to be seen by such.

120

Away, then, sleepless care ; complaint, away ;
 And, envy, with thy " jealous leer malign !"
 Nor let the monster calumny shoot forth
 Her venom'd tongue at me. Detested foes !
 Ye all are impotent against my peace,
 For I am privileged, and bear my breast
 Safe, and too high for your viperean wound.

130

But thou, my father ! since to render thanks
 Equivalent, and to requite by deeds
 Thy liberality, exceeds my power,
 Suffice it that I thus record thy gifts,
 And bear them treasured in a grateful mind !
 Ye too, the favourite pastime of my youth,
 My voluntary numbers, if ye dare
 To hope longevity and to survive
 Your master's funeral pile not soon absorbed,
 In the oblivious Lethæan gulf,
 Shall to futurity perhaps convey
 This theme, and by these praises of my sire
 Improve the fathers of a distant age !

140

TO SALSILLUS

A ROMAN POET, MUCH INDISPOSED

The original is written in a measure called *Scaxon*, which signifies *limping*, and the measure is so denominated because, though in other respects Iambic, it terminates with a Spondee, and has consequently a more tardy movement.

The reader will immediately see that this property of the Latin verse cannot be imitated in English.

My halting Muse, that dragg'st by choice along
 Thy slow, slow step, in melancholy song,
 And likest that pace expressive of thy cares
 Not less than Deiopeia's sprightlier airs,
 When in the dance she beats with measured tread
 Heaven's floor, in front of Juno's golden bed ;
 Salute Salsillus, who to verse divine
 Prefers, with partial love, such lays as mine.
 Thus writes that Milton, then, who, wafted o'er
 From his own nest on Albion's stormy shore 10
 Where Eurus, fiercest of the Æolian band,
 Sweeps with ungoverned rage the blasted land,
 Of late to more serene Ausonia came
 To view her cities of illustrious name,
 To prove, himself a witness of the truth,
 How wise her elders and how learn'd her youth.
 Much good, Salsillus ! and a body free
 From all disease, that Milton asks for thee,
 Who now endurest the languor and the pains
 That bile inflicts, diffused through all thy veins, 20
 Relentless malady ! not moved to spare
 By thy sweet Roman voice and Lesbian air !
 Health, Hebe's sister, sent us from the skies,
 And thou, Apollo, whom all sickness flies,
 Pythius, or Pæan, or what name divine
 Soe'er thou choose, haste, heal a priest of thine !
 Ye groves of Faunus, and ye hills that melt
 With vinous dews, where meek Evander dwelt,
 If aught salubrious in your confines grow,
 Strive which shall soonest heal your poet's woe, 30
 That, rendered to the Muse he loves, again
 He may enchant the meadows with his strain.
 Numa, reclined in everlasting ease
 Amid the shade of dark embowering trees,
 Viewing with eyes of unabated fire
 His loved Ægeria, shall that strain admire :

So soothed, the tumid Tiber shall revere
 The tombs of kings, nor desolate the year,
 Shall curb his waters with a friendly rein,
 And guide them harmless till they meet the main.

40

TO GIOVANNI BATTISTA MANSO.

MARQUIS OF VILLA

MILTON'S ACCOUNT OF MANSO

Giovanni Battista Manso, Marquis of Villa, is an Italian nobleman of the highest estimation among his countrymen, for genius, literature, and military accomplishments. To him Torquato Tasso addressed his *Dialogue on Friendship*, for he was much the friend of Tasso, who has also celebrated him among the other princes of his country, in his poem entitled "*Gerusalemme Conquistata*," book xx.

*Fra cavalier magnanimi, e cortesi,
 Risplende il Manso.*

During the Author's stay at Naples he received at the hands of the Marquis a thousand kind offices and civilities, and, desirous not to appear ungrateful, sent him this poem a short time before his departure from that city.

THESE verses also to thy praise the Nine—
 O Manso! happy in that theme—design;
 For, Gallus and Mæcenæ gone, they see
 None such besides, or whom they love as thee;
 And if my verse may give the meed of fame,
 Thine too shall prove an everlasting name.
 Already such, it shines in Tasso's page
 (For thou wast Tasso's friend) from age to age,
 And, next, the Muse consigned (not unaware
 How high the charge) Marino to thy care,
 Who, singing to the nymphs Adonis' praise,
 Boasts thee the patron of his copious lays.
 To thee alone the poet would entrust
 His latest vows, to thee alone his dust;
 And thou with punctual piety hast paid,
 In laboured brass, thy tribute to his shade.
 Nor this contented thee,—but lest the grave
 Should aught absorb of theirs which thou couldst save,
 All future ages thou hast deigned to teach
 The life, lot, genius, character of each,
 Eloquent as the Carian sage, who, true
 To his great theme, the life of Homer drew.

20

20

I, therefore, though a stranger youth, who come
Chilled by rude blasts that freeze my northern home,
Thee dear to Clio confident proclaim,
And thine, for Phœbus' sake, a deathless name.
Nor thou, so kind, wilt view with scornful eye
A Muse scarce reared beneath our sullen sky,
Who fears not, indiscreet as she is young,
To seek in Latium hearers of her song. 30
We too, where Thames with his unsullied waves
The tresses of the blue-haired Ocean laves,
Hear oft by night, or slumbering seem to hear,
O'er his wide stream, the swan's voice warbling clear,
And we could boast a Tityrus of yore,
Who trod, a welcome guest, our happy shore.

Yes, dreary as we own our northern clime,
Even we to Phœbus raise the polished rhyme.
We too serve Phœbus ; Phœbus has received.
(If legends old may claim to be believed) 40
No sordid gifts from us, the golden ear,
The burnished apple, ruddiest of the year,
The fragrant crocus, and, to grace his fane,
Fair damsels chosen from the Druid train ;
Druids, our native bards in ancient time,
Who gods and heroes praised in hallowed rhyme.
Hence, often as the maids of Greece surround
Apollo's shrine with hymns of festive sound,
They name the virgins, who arrived of yore
With British offerings on the Delian shore ; 50
Loxo, from giant Corineus sprung,
Upis, on whose blest lips the future hung,
And Hecaerge, with the golden hair,
All decked with Pictish hues, and all with bosoms bare.

Thou, therefore, happy sage, whatever clime
Shall ring with Tasso's praise in after-time,
Or with Marino's, shalt be known their friend,
And with an equal flight to fame ascend.
The world shall hear how Phœbus and the Nine
Were inmates once, and willing guests of thine. 60
Yet Phœbus, when of old constrained to roam
The earth, an exile from his heavenly home,
Entered, no willing guest, Admetus' door,
Though Hercules had ventured there before.
But gentle Chiron's cave was near, a scene
Of rural peace, clothed with perpetual green,
And thither, oft as respite he required
From rustic clamours loud, the god retired.
There, many a time, on Peneus' bank reclined

At some oak's root, with ivy thick entwined,
 Won by his hospitable friend's desire,
 He soothed his pains of exile with the lyre.
 Then shook the hills, then trembled Peneus' shore,
 Nor Ceta felt his load of forests more;
 The upland elms descended to the plain,
 And softened lynxes wondered at the strain.

70

Well may we think, O dear to all above!
 Thy birth distinguished by the smile of Jove,
 And that Apollo shed his kindest power,
 And Maia's son, on that propitious hour,
 Since only minds so born can comprehend
 A poet's worth, or yield that worth a friend.
 Hence on thy yet unfaded cheek appears
 The lingering freshness of thy greener years;
 Hence, in thy front and features we admire
 Nature unwithered and a mind entire.

80

Oh might so true a friend to me belong,
 So skilled to grace the votaries of song,
 Should I recall hereafter into rhyme
 The kings and heroes of my native clime,
 Arthur the chief, who even now prepares,
 In subterraneous being, future wars,
 With all his martial knights, to be restored
 Each to his seat around the federal board;
 And oh, if spirit fail me not, disperse
 Our Saxon plunderers, in triumphant verse:
 Then, after all, when, with the past content,
 A life I finish, not in silence spent,
 Should he, kind mourner, o'er my death-bed bend,
 I shall but need to say—"Be yet my friend!"
 He, too, perhaps, shall bid the marble breathe
 To honour me, and with the graceful wreath,
 Or of Parnassus or the Paphian isle,
 Shall bind my brows,—but I shall rest the while.
 Then also, if the fruits of faith endure,
 And virtue's promised recompense be sure,
 Borne to those seats to which the blest aspire
 By purity of soul and virtuous fire,
 These rites, as fate permits, I shall survey
 With eyes illumined by celestial day,
 And, every cloud from my pure spirit driven,
 Joy in the bright beatitude of heaven!

90

100

110

ON THE DEATH OF DAMON

THE ARGUMENT

Thyrsis and Damon, shepherds and neighbours, had always pursued the same studies, and had, from their earliest days, been united in the closest friendship. Thyrsis, while travelling for improvement, received intelligence of the death of Damon, and, after a time, returning and finding it true, deplores himself, and his solitary condition, in his poem.

By Damon is to be understood Charles Deodati, connected with the Italian city of Lucca by his father's side, in other respects an Englishman; a youth of uncommon genius, erudition, and virtue.

YE nymphs of Himera (for ye have shed
 Erewhile for Daphnis, and for Hylas dead,
 And over Bion's long-lamented bier,
 The fruitless meed of many a sacred tear),
 Now through the villas laved by Thames rehearse
 The woes of Thyrsis in Sicilian verse,
 What sighs he heaved, and how with groans profound
 He made the woods and hollow rocks resound,
 Young Damon dead; nor even ceased to pour
 His lonely sorrows at the midnight hour. 10

The green wheat twice had nodded in the ear,
 And golden harvest twice enriched the year,
 Since Damon's lips had gasped for vital air
 The last, last time, nor Thyrsis yet was there;
 For he, enamoured of the Muse, remained
 In Tuscan Fiorenza long detained,
 But, stored at length with all he wished to learn,
 For his flock's sake now hasted to return;
 And when the shepherd had resumed his seat
 At the elm's root, within his old retreat, 20
 Then 'twas his lot, then, all his loss to know,
 And, from his burthened heart, he vented thus his woe:

"Go, seek your home, my lambs; my thoughts are due
 "To other cares than those of feeding you.
 "Alas! what deities shall I suppose
 "In heaven, or earth, concerned for human woes,
 "Since, O my Damon! their severe decree
 "So soon condemns me to regret of thee!
 "Departest thou thus, thy virtues unrepaid
 "With fame and honour, like a vulgar shade? 30
 "Let him forbid it whose bright rod controls
 "And separates sordid from illustrious souls,
 "Drive far the rabble, and to thee assign
 "A happier lot, with spirits worthy thine!

"Go, seek your home, my lambs ; my thoughts are due
 "To other cares than those of feeding you.
 "Whate'er befall, unless by cruel chance
 "The wolf first give me a forbidding glance,
 "Thou shalt not moulder undeplord, but long
 "Thy praise shall dwell on every shepherd's tongue ; 40
 "To Daphnis first they shall delight to pay,
 "And, after him, to thee, the votive lay,
 "While Pales shall the flocks and pastures love,,
 "Or Faunus to frequent the field or grove,
 "At least, if ancient piety and truth,
 "With all the learned labours of thy youth,
 "May serve thee aught, or to have left behind
 "A sorrowing friend, and of the tuneful kind.

"Go, seek your home, my lambs ; my thoughts are due
 "To other cares than those of feeding you. 50
 "Yes, Damon ! such thy sure reward shall be ;
 "But ah, what doom awaits unhappy me ?
 "Who now my pains and perils shall divide,
 "As thou wast wont, for ever at my side,
 "Both when the rugged frost annoyed our feet,
 "And when the herbage all was parched with heat ;
 "Whether the grim wolf's ravage to prevent,
 "Or the huge lion's, armed with darts we went ?
 "Whose converse, now, shall calm my stormy day,,
 "With charming song who now beguile my way ? 60

"Go, seek your home, my lambs ; my thoughts are due
 "To other cares than those of feeding you.
 "In whom shall I confide ? whose counsel find
 "A balmy medicine for my troubled mind ?
 "Or whose discourse with innocent delight
 "Shall fill me now, and cheat the wintry night,
 "While hisses on my hearth the pulpy pear,
 "And blackening chestnuts start and crackle there,
 "While storms abroad the dreary meadows whelm,
 "And the wind thunders through the neighbouring elm ? 70

"Go, seek your home, my lambs ; my thoughts are due
 "To other cares than those of feeding you.
 "Or who, when summer suns their summit reach,
 "And Pan sleeps hidden by the sheltering beech,
 "When shepherds disappear, nymphs seek the sedge,
 "And the stretched rustic snores beneath the hedge,
 "Who then shall render me thy pleasant vein
 "Of Attic wit, thy jests, thy smiles, again ?

"Go, seek your home, my lambs ; my thoughts are due
 "To other cares than those of feeding you. 80
 "Where glens and vales are thickest overgrown.

" With tangled boughs, I wander now alone,
 " Till night descend, while blustering wind and shower
 " Beat on my temples through the shattered bower.

" Go, seek your home, my lambs ; my thoughts are due
 " To other cares than those of feeding you.

" Alas ! what rampant weeds now shame my fields,

" And what a mildewed crop the furrow yields !

" My rambling vines, unwedded to the trees,

" Bear shrivelled grapes ; my myrtles fail to please ; 90

" Nor please me more my flocks ; they, slighted, turn

" Their unavailing looks on me, and mourn.

" Go, seek your home, my lambs ; my thoughts are due
 " To other cares than those of feeding you.

" Ægon invites me to the hazel grove,

" Amyntas, on the river's bank to rove,

" And young Alpheſibœus to a seat

" Where branching elms exclude the mid-day heat.

" ' Here fountains spring,—here mossy hillocks rise ;

" ' Here Zephyr whispers, and the stream replies.' 100

" Thus each persuades, but, deaf to every call,

" I gain the thickets, and escape them all.

" Go, seek your home, my lambs ; my thoughts are due
 " To other cares than those of feeding you.

" Then Mopsus said, (the same who reads so well

" The voice of birds, and what the stars foretell,

" For he by chance had noticed my return,)

" ' What means thy sullen mood, this deep concern ?

" ' Ah, Thyrsis ! thou art either crazed with love

" ' Or some sinister influence from above ; 110

" ' Dull Saturn's influence oft the shepherds rue ;

" ' His leaden shaft oblique has pierced thee through.'

" Go, go, my lambs, unpastured as ye are,

" My thoughts are all now due to other care.

" The nymphs, amazed, my melancholy see,

" And ' Thyrsis ! ' cry, ' what will become of thee ?

" ' What wouldst thou, Thyrsis ? such should not appear

" ' The brow of youth, stern, gloomy, and severe ;

" ' Brisk youth should laugh and love,—ah, shun the fate

" ' Of those twice wretched mopes who love too late !' 120

" Go, go, my lambs, unpastured as ye are ;

" My thoughts are all now due to other care.

" Ægle with Hyas came, to soothe my pain,

" And Baucis' daughter, Dryope the vain,

" Fair Dryope, for voice and finger neat

" Known far and near, and for her self-conceit ;

" Came Chloris too, whose cottage on the lands

" That skirt the Idumanian current stands ;

“ But all in vain they came, and but to see
 “ Kind words, and comfortable, lost on me. 130

“ Go, go, my lambs, unpastured as ye are ;
 “ My thoughts are all now due to other care.
 “ Ah, blest indifference of the playful herd,
 “ None by his fellow chosen or preferred !
 “ No bonds of amity the flocks enthrall,
 “ But each associates and is pleased with all ;
 “ So graze the dappled deer in numerous droves,
 “ And all his kind alike the zebra loves !

“ The same law governs where the billows roar
 “ And Proteus’ shoals o’erspread the desert shore ; 140

“ The sparrow, meanest of the feathered race,
 “ His fit companion finds in every place,
 “ With whom he picks the grain that suits him best,
 “ Flirts here and there, and late returns to rest,
 “ And whom, if chance the falcon make his prey,
 “ Or hedger with his well-aimed arrow slay,
 “ For no such loss the gay survivor grieves,
 “ New love he seeks, and new delight receives.

“ We only, an obdurate kind, rejoice,
 “ Scorning all others, in a single choice. 150

“ We scarce in thousands meet one kindred mind ;
 “ And if the long-sought good at last we find,
 “ When least we fear it, Death our treasure steals,
 “ And gives our heart a wound that nothing heals.

“ Go, go, my lambs, unpastured as ye are ;
 “ My thoughts are all now due to other care.
 “ Ah, what delusion lured me from my flocks,
 “ To traverse Alpine snows and rugged rocks !
 “ What need so great had I to visit Rome,
 “ Now sunk in ruins, and herself a tomb ? 160

“ Or, had she flourished still as when of old
 “ For her sake Tityrus forsook his fold,
 “ What need so great had I to incur a pause
 “ Of thy sweet intercourse for such a cause,
 “ For such a cause to place the roaring sea,
 “ Rocks, mountains, woods, between my friend and me ?
 “ Else had I grasped thy feeble hand, composed
 “ Thy decent limbs, thy drooping eyelids closed,
 “ And, at the last, had said—‘ Farewell,—ascend,—
 “ ‘ Nor even in the skies forget thy friend ! ’ 170

“ Go, go, my lambs, untended homeward fare ;
 “ My thoughts are all now due to other care.
 “ Although well pleased, ye tuneful Tuscan swains !
 “ My mind the memory of your worth retains,
 “ Yet not your worth can teach me less to mourn

" My Damon lost ;—he too was Tuscan born,
 " Born in your Lucca, city of renown !
 " And wit possessed, and genius, like your own.
 " Oh, how elate was I, when, stretched beside
 " The murmuring course of Arno's breezy tide, 180
 " Beneath the poplar grove I passed my hours,
 " Now cropping myrtles, and now vernal flowers,
 " And hearing, as I lay at ease along,
 " Your swains contending for the prize of song !
 " I also dared attempt (and, as it seems,
 " Not much displeased attempting) various themes,
 " For even I can presents boast from you,
 " The shepherd's pipe, and osier basket too ;
 " And Dati, and Francini, both have made
 " My name familiar to the beechen shade, 190
 " And they are learn'd, and each in every place
 " Renowned for song, and both of Lydian race.
 " Go, go, my lambs, untended homeward fare ;
 " My thoughts are all now due to other care.
 " While bright the dewy grass with moonbeams shone,
 " And I stood hurdling in my kids alone,
 " How often have I said (but thou hadst found
 " Ere then thy dark cold lodgment under ground),
 " ' Now Damon sings, or springes sets for hares,
 " ' Or wickerwork for various use prepares ! ' 200
 " How oft, indulging fancy, have I planned
 " New scenes of pleasure that I hoped at hand,
 " Called thee abroad as I was wont, and cried,
 " ' What, ho ! my friend,—come lay thy task aside,
 " ' Haste, let us forth together, and beguile
 " ' The heat beneath yon whispering shades awhile,
 " ' Or on the margin stray of Colne's clear flood,
 " ' Or where Cassibelan's grey turrets stood !
 " ' There thou shalt cull me simples, and shalt teach
 " ' Thy friend the name and healing powers of each, 210
 " ' From the tall bluebell to the dwarfish weed,
 " ' What the dry land and what the marshes breed,
 " ' For all their kinds alike to thee are known,
 " ' And the whole art of Galen is thy own,'
 " Ah, perish Galen's art, and withered be
 " The useless herbs that gave not health to thee !
 " Twelve evenings since, as in poetic dream
 " I meditating sat some statelier theme,
 " The reeds no sooner touched my lip, though new
 " And unessay'd before, than wide they flew, 220
 " Bursting their waxen bands, nor could sustain
 " The deep-toned music of the solemn strain ;

" And I am vain perhaps, but I will tell
 " How proud a theme I choose,—ye groves, farewell !
 " Go, go, my lambs, untended homeward fare ;
 " My thoughts are all now due to other care.
 " Of Brutus, Dardan chief, my song shall be,
 " How with his barks he ploughed the British sea,
 " First from Rutupia's towering headland seen,
 " And of his consort's reign, fair Imogen : 230
 " Of Brennus and Belinus, brothers bold,
 " And of Arviragus, and how of old
 " Our hardy sires the Armorican controlled,
 " And of the wife of Gorlois, who, surprised
 " By Uther, in her husband's form disguised
 " (Such was the force of Merlin's art), became
 " Pregnant with Arthur of heroic fame.
 " These themes I now revolve,—and oh, if Fate
 " Proportion to these themes my lengthened date,
 " Adieu my shepherd's reed ! yon pine-tree bough 240
 " Shall be thy future home ; there dangle thou
 " Forgotten and disused, unless ere long
 " Thou change thy Latian for a British song ;
 " A British ?—even so,—the powers of man
 " Are bounded ; little is the most he can :
 " And it shall well suffice me, and shall be
 " Fame and proud recompense enough for me,
 " If Usa, golden-haired, my verse may learn,
 " If Alain bending o'er his crystal urn,
 " Swift-whirling Abra, Trent's o'ershadowed stream, 250
 " Thames, lovelier far than all in my esteem,
 " Tamar's ore-tinctured flood, and, after these,
 " The wave-worn shores of utmost Orcades.
 " Go, go, my lambs, untended homeward fare ;
 " My thoughts are all now due to other care.
 " All this I kept in leaves of laurel-rind
 " Enfolded safe, and for thy view designed
 " This, and a gift from Manso's hand beside
 " (Manso, not least his native city's pride),
 " Two cups that radiant as their giver shone, 260
 " Adorned by sculpture with a double zone.
 " The spring was graven there ; here slowly wind
 " The Red-sea shores, with groves of spices lined ;
 " Her plumes of various hues amid the boughs
 " The sacred, solitary Phoenix shows,
 " And, watchful of the dawn, reverts her head
 " To see Aurora leave her watery bed.—
 " In other part, the expansive vault above,
 " And there too, even there, the god of love ;

“ With quiver armed he mounts, his torch displays 270
“ A vivid light, his gem-tipt arrows blaze,
• “ Around his bright and fiery eyes he rolls,
“ Nor aims at vulgar minds or little souls,
“ Nor deigns one look below, but aiming high
“ Sends every arrow to the lofty sky ;
“ Hence forms divine, and minds immortal, learn
“ The power of Cupid, and enamoured burn.
“ Thou, also, Damon (neither need I fear
“ That hope delusive), thou art also there ;
“ For whither should simplicity like thine 280
“ Retire ? where else such spotless virtue shine ?
“ Thou dwellest not (thought profane) in shades below,
“ Nor tears suit thee ;—cease then my tears to flow !
“ Away with grief, on Damon ill bestowed,
“ Who, pure himself, has found a pure abode,
“ Has passed the showery arch, henceforth resides
“ With saints and heroes, and from flowing tides
“ Quaffs copious immortality and joy,
“ With hallowed lips !—Oh ! blest without alloy,
“ And now enriched with all that faith can claim, 290
“ Look down, entreated by whatever name,
“ If Damon please thee most (that rural sound
“ Shall oft with echoes fill the groves around)
“ Or if Diodatus, by which alone
“ In those ethereal mansions thou art known.
“ Thy blush was maiden, and thy youth the taste
“ Of wedded bliss knew never, pure and chaste :
“ The honours, therefore, by divine decree
“ The lot of virgin worth, are given to thee ;
“ Thy brows encircled with a radiant band, 300
“ And the green palm-branch waving in thy hand,
“ Thou in immortal nuptials shalt rejoice,
“ And join with seraphs thy according voice,
“ Where rapture reigns, and the ecstatic lyre
“ Guides the blest orgies of the blazing quire.”

AN ODE ADDRESSED TO MR. JOHN ROUSE

LIBRARIAN OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

ON A LOST VOLUME OF MY POEMS, WHICH HE DESIRED ME TO REPLACE,
THAT HE MIGHT ADD THEM TO MY OTHER WORKS DEPOSITED
IN THE LIBRARY

This Ode is rendered without rhyme, that it might more adequately represent the original, which, as Milton himself informs us, is of no certain measure. It may possibly for this reason disappoint the reader, though it cost the writer more labour than the translation of any other piece in the whole collection.—C.

STROPHE

My twofold book ! single in show,
But double in contents,
Neat, but not curiously adorned,
Which, in his early youth,
A poet gave, no lofty one in truth,
Although an earnest wooer of the muse—
Say while in cool Ausonian shades
Or British wilds he roamed,
Striking by turns his native lyre,
By turns the Daunian lute,
And stepped almost in air ;

10

ANTISTROPHE

Say, little book, what furtive hand
Thee from thy fellow-books conveyed,
What time, at the repeated suit
Of my most learned friend,
I sent thee forth, an honoured traveller,
From our great city to the source of Thames,
Cærulean sire ;
Where rise the fountains, and the raptures ring
Of the Aonian choir,
Durable as yonder spheres,
And through the endless lapse of years
Secure to be admired ?

20

STROPHE II

Now what god, or demigod,
For Britain's ancient genius moved
(If our afflicted land

Have expiated at length the guilty sloth
 Of her degenerate sons)
 Shall terminate our impious feuds,
 And discipline, with hallowed voice, recall ? 30
 Recall the Muses too,
 Driven from their ancient seats
 In Albion, and well-nigh from Albion's shore,
 And with keen Phœbean shafts
 Piercing the unseemly birds,
 Whose talons menace us,
 Shall drive the harpy race from Helicon afar ?

ANTISTROPHE

But thou, my book, though thou hast strayed,
 Whether by treachery lost,
 Or indolent neglect, thy bearer's fault, 40
 From all thy kindred books,
 To some dark cell, or cave forlorn,
 Where thou endurest, perhaps,
 The chafing of some hard untutored hand,
 Be comforted—
 For lo ! again the splendid hope appears
 That thou mayest yet escape
 The gulfs of Lethe, and on oary wings
 Mount to the everlasting courts of Jove !

STROPHE III

Since Rouse desires thee, and complains 50
 That though by promise his,
 Thou yet appearest not in thy place
 Among the literary noble stores
 Given to his care,
 But, absent, leavest his numbers incomplete
 He, therefore, guardian vigilant
 Of that unperishing wealth,
 Calls thee to the interior shrine, his charge,
 Where he intends a richer treasure far
 Than Ion kept (Ion, Erechtheus' son 60
 Illustrious, of the fair Creüsa born)
 In the resplendent temple of his god,
 Tripods of gold, and Delphic gifts divine.

ANTISTROPHE

Haste, then to the pleasant groves,
 The Muses' favourite haunt ;
 Resume thy station in Apollo's dome,

Dearer to him
 Than Delos, or the forked Parnassian hill !
 Exulting go,
 Since now a splendid lot is also thine,
 And thou art sought by my propitious friend ;
 For there thou shalt be read
 With authors of exalted note,
 The ancient glorious lights of Greece and Rome.

70

EPODE

Ye then, my works, no longer vain
 And worthless deemed by me !
 Whate'er this sterile genius has produced
 Expect, at last, the rage of Envy spent,
 An unmolested happy home,
 Gift of kind Hermes, and my watchful friend ;
 Where never flippant tongue profane
 Shall entrance find,
 And whence the coarse unlettered multitude
 Shall babble far remote.
 Perhaps some future distant age,
 Less tinged with prejudice, and better taught,
 Shall furnish minds of power
 To judge more equally.
 Then, Malice silenced in the tomb,
 Cooler heads and sounder hearts,
 Thanks to Rouse, if aught of praise
 I merit, shall with candour weigh the claim.

80

90

THE PHILOSOPHER AND THE KING

A Philosopher, included in the same sentence of condemnation with several guilty persons among whom he had been apprehended, sent the following lines, composed suddenly in the moment when he was going to death, to a certain King who had ignorantly condemned him.

Know this, O King, that if thou shalt destroy
 Me, no man's enemy, and who have lived
 Obedient to the laws, thou mayst with ease
 Strike off a wise man's head, but, taught the truth
 Hereafter, shalt with vain regret deplore
 Thy city's loss of one her chief support.

ON THE ENGRAVER OF HIS PORTRAIT

Look on myself, and thou shalt own at once
This copy of me taken by a dunce ;
My friends, who gaze and guess not whom ye see,
Laugh ! Would ye think it ? He intended me !

TRANSLATIONS OF THE ITALIAN POEMS

SONNET

FAIR Lady ; whose harmonious name the Rhine,
Through all his grassy vale, delights to hear,
Base were indeed the wretch who could forbear
To love a spirit elegant as thine,
That manifests a sweetness all divine,
Nor knows a thousand winning acts to spare,
And graces, which Love's bow and arrows are,
Tempering thy virtues to a softer shine.
When gracefully thou speakest, or singest gay,
Such strains as might the senseless forest move,
Ah then—turn each his eyes and ears away,
Who feels himself unworthy of thy love !
Grace can alone preserve him, ere the dart
Of fond desire yet reach his inmost heart.

SONNET

As on a hill-top rude, when closing day
Imbrowns the scene, some pastoral maiden fair
Waters a lovely foreign plant with care,
Borne from its native genial airs away,
That scarcely can its tender bud display ;
So on my tongue these accents, new and rare,
Are flowers exotic, which, Love waters there,
While thus, O sweetly scornful ! I essay

Thy praise in verse to British ears unknown,
 And Thames exchange for Arno's fair domain ;
 So Love has willed, and oft-times Love has shown
 That what he wills he never wills in vain.
 Oh that this hard and sterile breast might be
 To Him, who plants from heaven, a soil as free !

CANZONE

THEY mock my toil—the nymphs and amorous swains—
 And “ whence this fond attempt to write,” they cry,
 “ Love-songs in language that thou little knowest ?
 “ How darest thou risk to sing these foreign strains ?
 “ Say truly,—findest not oft thy purpose crossed,
 “ And that thy fairest flowers here fade and die ? ”
 Then, with pretence of admiration high—
 “ Thee other shores expect, and other tides ;
 “ Rivers, on whose grassy sides
 “ Her deathless laurel leaf, with which to bind
 “ Thy flowing locks, already Fame provides ;
 “ Why then this burthen, better far declined ? ”
 Speak, Muse ! for me.—The fair one said, who guides
 My willing heart, and all my fancy's flights,
 “ This is the language in which Love delights.”

SONNET

TO CHARLES DIODATI

CHARLES—and I say it wondering—thou must know
 That I, who once assumed a scornful air
 And scoffed at Love—am fallen in his snare ;
 (Full many an upright man has fallen so.)
 Yet think me not thus dazzled by the flow
 Of golden locks, or damask cheek ; more rare
 The heartfelt beauties of my foreign fair,
 A mien majestic, with dark brows that show
 The tranquil lustre of a lofty mind ;
 Words exquisite, of idioms more than one,
 And song, whose fascinating power might bind,
 And from her sphere draw down, the labouring moon :
 With such fire-darting eyes that, should I fill
 My ears with wax, she would enchant me still.

SONNET

LADY ! it cannot be but that thine eyes
Must be my sun, such radiance they display,
And strike me even as Phœbus him whose way
Through horrid Libya's sandy desert lies.
Meantime, on that side steamy vapours rise
Where most I suffer. Of what kind are they,
New as to me they are, I cannot say,
But deem them, in the lover's language—sighs.
Some, though with pain, my bosom close conceals,
Which, if in part escaping thence they tend
To soften thine, thy coldness soon congeals.
While others to my tearful eyes ascend,
Whence my sad nights in showers are ever drowned,
Till my Aurora comes, her brow with roses bound.

SONNET

ENAMOURED, artless, young, on foreign ground,
Uncertain whither from myself to fly,
To thee, dear Lady, with an humble sigh
Let me devote my heart, which I have found
By certain proofs not few, intrepid, sound,
Good, and addicted to conceptions high :
When tempests shake the world, and fire the sky,
It rests in adamant self-wrapt around,
As safe from envy, and from outrage rude,
From hopes and fears that vulgar minds abuse,
As fond of genius and fixed fortitude,
Of the resounding lyre, and every muse.
Weak you will find it in one only part,
Now pierced by Love's immedicable dart.

TRANSLATIONS FROM VINCENT BOURNE

ON THE PICTURE OF A SLEEPING CHILD

SWEET babe, whose image here expressed
Does thy peaceful slumbers show ;
Guilt or fear, to break thy rest,
Never did thy spirit know.

Soothing slumbers, soft repose,
Such as mock the painter's skill,
Such as innocence bestows,
Harmless infant, lull thee still !

THE THRACIAN

THRACIAN parents, at his birth,
Mourn their babe with many a tear,
But with undissembled mirth
Place him breathless on his bier.

Greece and Rome with equal scorn
"O the savages !" exclaim ;
"Whether they rejoice or mourn,
Well entitled to the name !"

But the cause of this concern
And this pleasure would they trace,
Even they might somewhat learn
From the savages of Thrace.

RECIPROCAL KINDNESS THE PRIMARY LAW OF NATURE

ANDROCLES from his injured lord, in dread
Of instant death, to Libya's desert fled.
Tired with his toilsome flight, and parched with heat,
He spied, at length, a cavern's cool retreat ;



COWPER'S HOUSE AT WESTON
FROM AN ENGRAVING BY GODDALL AFTER A DRAWING BY W. HARVEY

But scarce had given to rest his weary frame,
 When, hugest of his kind, a lion came :
 He roared approaching ; but the savage din
 To plaintive murmurs changed arrived within,
 And, with expressive looks his lifted paw
 Presenting, aid implored from whom he saw. 10
 The fugitive, through terror at a stand,
 Dared not awhile afford his trembling hand ;
 But, bolder grown, at length inherent found
 A pointed thorn, and drew it from the wound.
 The cure was wrought ; he wiped the sanious blood,
 And firm and free from pain the lion stood.
 Again he seeks the wilds, and day by day
 Regales his inmate with the parted prey ;
 Nor he disdains the dole, though unprepared,
 Spread on the ground, and with a lion shared. 20
 But thus to live, still lost, sequestered still !
 Scarce seemed his lord's revenge a heavier ill.
 Home ! native home ! oh might he but repair !
 He must, he will, though death attends him there.
 He goes, and, doomed to perish, on the sands,
 Of the whole theatre unpitied, stands ;
 When lo ! the self-same lion from his cage
 Flies to devour him, famished into rage.
 He flies, but viewing in his purposed prey
 The man, his healer, pauses on his way, 30
 And, softened by remembrance into sweet
 And kind composure, crouches at his feet.
 Mute with astonishment the assembly gaze :
 But why, ye Romans ? Whence your mute amaze ?
 All this is natural : nature bade him rend
 An enemy ; she bids him spare a friend.

A MANUAL

MORE ANCIENT THAN THE ART OF PRINTING, AND NOT TO BE
 FOUND IN ANY CATALOGUE

THERE is a book, which we may call
 (Its excellence is such)
 Alone a library, though small ;
 The ladies thumb it much.

Words none, things numerous, it contains ;
 And, things with words compared,
 Who needs be told, that has his brains,
 Which merits most regard ?

Oft-times its leaves of scarlet hue
A golden edging boast ;
And, opened, it displays to view
Twelve pages at the most.

Nor name, nor title, stamped behind,
Adorns its outer part ;
But all within 'tis richly lined,
A magazine of art.

The whitest hands that secret hoard
Oft visit ; and the fair
Preserve it in their bosoms stored,
As with a miser's care.

Thence implements of every size,
And formed for various use,
(They need but to consult their eyes,)
They readily produce.

The largest and the longest kind
Possess the foremost page,
A sort most needed by the blind,
Or nearly such from age.

The full-charged leaf, which next ensues,
Presents in bright array
The smaller sort, which matrons use,
Not quite so blind as they.

The third, the fourth, the fifth supply
What their occasions ask
Who with a more discerning eye
Perform a nicer task.

But still with regular decrease
From size to size they fall,
In every leaf grow less and less ;
The last are least of all.

Oh ! what a fund of genius, pent
In narrow space, is here !
This volume's method and intent
How luminous and clear !

It leaves no reader at a loss
Or posed, whoever reads :
No commentator's tedious gloss
Nor even index needs.

Search Bodley's many thousands o'er!
 No book is treasured there,
 Nor yet in Granta's numerous store,
 That may with this compare.

No!—rival none in either host
 Of this was ever seen,
 Or that contents could justly boast
 So brilliant and so keen.

AN ENIGMA

A NEEDLE, small as small can be,
 In bulk and use surpasses me,
 Nor is my purchase dear;
 For little, and almost for nought,
 As many of my kind are bought
 As days are in the year.

Yet though but little use we boast,
 And are procured at little cost,
 The labour is not light;
 Nor few artificers it asks,
 All skilful in their several tasks,
 To fashion us aright.

One fuses metal o'er the fire,
 A second draws it into wire,
 The shears another plies
 Who clips in lengths the brazen thread
 For him who, chafing every shred,
 Gives all an equal size.

A fifth prepares, exact and round,
 The knob with which it must be crowned;
 His follower makes it fast:
 And with his mallet and his file
 To shape the point, employs awhile
 The seventh and the last.

Now therefore, *Œdipus*! declare
 What creature, wonderful and rare,
 A process that obtains
 Its purpose with so much ado
 At last produces!—tell me true,
 And take me for your pains!

SPARROWS SELF-DOMESTICATED

IN TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

NONE ever shared the social feast,
 Or as an inmate or a guest,
 Beneath the celebrated dome
 Where once Sir Isaac had his home,
 Who saw not (and with some delight
 Perhaps he viewed the novel sight)
 How numerous at the tables there
 The sparrows beg their daily fare.
 For there, in every nook and cell
 Where such a family may dwell,
 Sure as the vernal season comes
 Their nests they weave in hope of crumbs
 Which kindly given may serve with food
 Convenient their unfeathered brood ;
 And oft as with its summons clear
 The warning bell salutes their ear,
 Sagacious listeners to the sound,
 They flock from all the fields around,
 To reach the hospitable hall,
 None more attentive to the call.
 Arrived, the pensionary band,
 Hopping and chirping, close at hand,
 Solicit what they soon receive,
 The sprinkled, plenteous donative.
 Thus is a multitude, though large,
 Supported at a trivial charge ;
 A single doit would overpay
 The expenditure of every day,
 And who can grudge so small a grace
 To suppliants, natives of the place ?

FAMILIARITY DANGEROUS

As in her ancient mistress' lap
 The youthful Tabby lay,
 They gave each other many a tap,
 Alike disposed to play.

But strife ensues. Puss waxes warm,
And with protruded claws
Ploughs all the length of Lydia's arm,
Mere wantonness the cause.

At once, resentful of the deed,
She shakes her to the ground,
With many a threat that she shall bleed
With still a deeper wound.

But, Lydia, bid thy fury rest ;
It was a venial stroke :
For she that will with kittens jest
Should bear a kitten's joke.

INVITATION TO THE REDBREAST

SWEET bird, whom the Winter constrains—
And seldom another it can—
To seek a retreat while he reigns
In the well-sheltered dwellings of man,
Who never can seem to intrude,
Though in all places equally free,
Come ! oft as the season is rude,
Thou art sure to be welcome to me.

At sight of the first feeble ray
That pierces the clouds of the east,
To inveigle thee every day
My windows shall show thee a feast :
For, taught by experience, I know
Thee mindful of benefit long,
And that, thankful for all I bestow,
Thou wilt pay me with many a song

Then soon as the swell of the buds
Bespeaks the renewal of Spring,
Fly hence, if thou wilt, to the woods,
Or where it shall please thee to sing :
And shouldst thou, compelled by a frost,
Come again to my window or door,
Doubt not an affectionate host,
Only pay as thou payedst me before.

Thus music must needs be confest
 To flow from a fountain above ;
 Else how should it work in the breast
 Unchangeable friendship and love ?
 And who on the globe can be found,
 Save your generation and ours,
 That can be delighted by sound,
 Or boasts any musical powers ?

STRADA'S NIGHTINGALE

THE shepherd touched his reed ; sweet Philomel
 Essayed, and oft essayed to catch the strain,
 And treasuring, as on her ear they fell,
 The numbers, echoed note for note again.

The peevish youth, who ne'er had found before
 A rival of his skill, indignant heard,
 And soon (for various was his tuneful store)
 In loftier tones defied the simple bird.

She dared the task, and rising, as he rose,
 With all the force that passion gives inspired,
 Returned the sounds awhile, but in the close,
 Exhausted fell, and at his feet expired.

Thus strength, not skill, prevailed. O fatal strife,
 By thee, poor songstress, playfully begun !
 And oh, sad victory, which cost thy life,
 And he may wish that he had never won.

ODE ON THE DEATH OF A LADY

WHO LIVED ONE HUNDRED YEARS, AND DIED ON HER BIRTHDAY, 1728

ANCIENT dame, how wide and vast,
 To a race like ours, appears,
 Rounded to an orb at last,
 All thy multitude of years !

We, the herd of human kind,
 Frailer and of feebler powers ;
 We, to narrow bounds confined,
 Soon exhaust the sum of ours.

Death's delicious banquet, we
 Perish even from the womb,
 Swifter than a shadow flee,
 Nourished but to feed the tomb.

Seeds of merciless disease
 Lurk in all that we enjoy;
 Some that waste us by degrees,
 Some that suddenly destroy.

And, if life o'erleap the bourn
 Common to the sons of men,
 What remains, but that we mourn,
 Dream, and dote, and drivel then?

Fast as moons can wax and wane,
 Sorrow comes; and while we groan,
 Pant with anguish and complain,
 Half our years are fled and gone.

If a few (to few 'tis given),
 Linger on this earthly stage,
 Creep and halt with steps uneven
 To the period of an age,

Wherefore live they, but to see
 Cunning, arrogance, and force,
 Sights lamented much by thee,
 Holding their accustomed course?

Oft was seen, in ages past,
 All that we with wonder view;
 Often shall be to the last;
 Earth produces nothing new.

Thee we gratulate; content
 Should propitious Heaven design
 Life for us as calmly spent,
 Though but half the length of thine.

THE CAUSE WON

Two neighbours furiously dispute;
 A field the subject of the suit.
 Trivial the spot, yet such the rage
 With which the combatants engage,

'Twere hard to tell who covets most
 The prize—at whatsoever cost.
 The pleadings swell. Words still suffice
 No single word but has its price :
 No term but yields some fair pretence
 For novel and increased expense.

Defendant thus becomes a name
 Which he that bore it may disclaim ;
 Since both, in one description blended,
 Are plaintiffs—when the suit is ended.

THE SILKWORM

THE beams of April, ere it goes,
 A worm, scarce visible, disclose ;
 All winter long content to dwell
 The tenant of his native shell.
 The same prolific season gives
 The sustenance by which he lives,
 The mulberry-leaf, a simple store,
 That serves him—till he needs no more !
 For, his dimensions once complete,
 Thenceforth none ever sees him eat ;
 Though, till his growing time be past,
 Scarce ever is he seen to fast.
 That hour arrived, his work begins ;
 He spins and weaves, and weaves and spins
 Till circle upon circle wound
 Careless around him and around
 Conceals him with a veil, though slight,
 Impervious to the keenest sight.
 Thus self-inclosed, as in a cask,
 At length he finishes his task :
 And, though a worm when he was lost,
 Or caterpillar at the most,
 When next we see him, wings he wears,
 And in papilio-pomp appears ;
 Becomes oviparous ; supplies
 With future worms and future flies
 The next ensuing year—and dies !
 Well were it for the world, if all
 Who creep about this earthly ball,
 Though shorter-lived than most he be,
 Were useful in their kind as he.

THE INNOCENT THIEF

Not a flower can be found in the fields,
 Or the spot that we till for our pleasure,
 From the largest to least, but it yields
 The Bee, never wearied, a treasure.

Scarce any she quits unexplored
 With a diligence duly exact ;
 Yet, steal what she may for her hoard,
 Leaves evidence none of the fact.

Her lucrative task she pursues,
 And pilfers with so much address,
 That none of their odour they lose,
 Nor charm by their beauty the less.

Not thus inoffensively preys
 The canker-worm, indwelling foe !
 His voracity not thus allays
 The sparrow, the finch, or the crow.

The worm, more expensively fed,
 The pride of the garden devours ;
 And birds peck the seed from the bed,
 Still less to be spared than the flowers.

But she, with such delicate skill,
 Her pillage so fits for her use
 That the chemist in vain with his still
 Would labour the like to produce.

Then grudge not her temperate meals,
 Nor a benefit blame as a theft ;
 Since, stole she not all that she steals,
 Neither honey nor wax would be left.

DENNER'S OLD WOMAN

In this mimic form of a matron in years
 How plainly the pencil of Denner appears !
 The matron herself, in whose old age we see
 Not a trace of decline, what a wonder is she !

No dimness of eye, and no cheek hanging low,
 No wrinkle, or deep-furrowed frown on the brow !
 Her forehead indeed is here circled around
 With locks like the riband with which they are bound ;
 While glossy and smooth, and as soft as the skin
 Of a delicate peach, is the down of her chin ;
 But nothing unpleasant, or sad, or severe,
 Or that indicates life in its winter, is here.
 Yet all is expressed, with fidelity due,
 Nor a pimple or freckle concealed from the view.

Many, fond of new sights, or who cherish a taste
 For the labours of art, to the spectacle haste ;
 The youths all agree that, could old age inspire
 The passion of love, hers would kindle the fire,
 And the matrons with pleasure confess that they see
 Ridiculous nothing or hideous in thee.
 The nymphs for themselves scarcely hope a decline,
 O wonderful woman ! as placid as thine.

Strange magic of art ! which the youth can engage
 To peruse, half-enamoured, the features of age ;
 And force from the virgin a sigh of despair,
 That she, when as old, shall be equally fair !
 How great is the glory that Denner has gained,
 Since Apelles not more for his Venus obtained !

THE TEARS OF A PAINTER

APELLES, hearing that his boy
 Had just expired, his only joy,
 Although the sight with anguish tore him,
 Bade place his dear remains before him.
 He seized his brush, his colours spread ;
 And—" Oh ! my child, accept," he said,
 " ('Tis all that I can now bestow,) "
 " This tribute of a father's woe ! "
 Then, faithful to the twofold part,
 Both of his feelings and his art,
 He closed his eyes with tender care,
 And formed at once a fellow pair.
 His brow with amber locks beset
 And lips he drew, not livid yet ;
 And shaded all that he had done
 To the just image of his son.

Thus far is well. But view again
 The cause of thy paternal pain !

Thy melancholy task fulfil !
 It needs the last, last touches still.
 Again his pencil's powers he tries,
 For on his lips a smile he spies :
 And still his cheek unfaded shows
 The deepest damask of the rose.
 Then, heedful to the finished whole,
 With fondest eagerness he stole,
 Till scarce himself distinctly knew
 The cherub copied from the true.
 Now, painter, cease ! Thy task is done.
 Long lives this image of thy son ;
 Nor short-lived shall the glory prove,
 Or of thy labour or thy love.

THE MAZE

FROM right to left, and to and fro,
 Caught in a labyrinth, you go,
 And turn, and turn, and turn again,
 To solve the mystery, but in vain ;
 Stand still and breathe, and take from me
 A clue that soon shall set you free !
 Not Ariadne, if you met her,
 Herself could serve you with a better.
 You entered easily—find where—
 And make, with ease, your exit there !

THE SNAIL

To grass, or leaf, or fruit, or wall,
 The Snail sticks close, nor fears to fall,
 As if he grew there, house and all
 Together.

Within that house secure he hides,
 When danger imminent betides
 Of storm, or other harm besides
 Of weather.

Give but his horns the slightest touch,
 His self-collecting power is such,
 He shrinks into his house with much
 Displeasure.

Till at length overspent, and his sides smeared with blood,
Down tumbles his horse, man and all, in the mud.
In a waggon or chaise shall he finish his route?
Oh ! scandalous fate ! he must do it on foot.

Young gentlemen, hear !—I am older than you !
The advice that I give I have proved to be true :
Wherever your journey may be, never doubt it,
The faster you ride, you're the longer about it.

VERSES TO THE MEMORY OF DR. LLOYD *

SPOKEN AT THE WESTMINSTER ELECTION NEXT AFTER HIS DECEASE

ABIIT senex ! periit senex amabilis !
 Quo non fuit jucundior.
 Lugete vos, ætas quibus maturior
 Senem colendum præstitit ;
 Seu quando, viribus valentioribus
 Firmoque fretus pectore,
 Florentiori vos juventute excolens
 Curâ fovebat patriâ ;
 Seu quando, fractus, jamque donatus rude,
 Vultu sed usque blandulo,
 Miscere gaudebat suas facetias
 His annuis leporibus.
 Vixit probus, purâque simplex indole,
 Blandisque comis moribus,
 Et dives æquâ mente—charus omnibus,
 Unius auctus munere.
 Ite tituli ! meritis beatioribus
 Aptate laudes debitas !
 Nec invidebat ille, si quibus favens
 Fortuna plus arriserat.
 Placide senex ! levi quiescas cespite,
 Etsi superbum nec vivo tibi
 Decus sit inditum, nec mortuo
 Lapis notatus nomine.

* I make no apology for the introduction of the following lines, though I have never learned who wrote them. Their elegance will sufficiently recommend them to persons of classical taste and erudition, and I shall be happy if the English version that they have received from me be found not to dishonour them. Affection for the memory of the worthy man whom they celebrate alone prompted me to this endeavour.—W. COWPER.

THE SAME IN ENGLISH

OUR good old friend is gone, gone to his rest,
 Whose social converse was itself a feast.
 O ye of riper age, who recollect
 How once ye loved and eyed him with respect,
 Both in the firmness of his better day,
 While yet he ruled you with a father's sway,
 And when, impaired by time and glad to rest,
 Yet still with looks in mild complacence drest,
 He took his annual seat and mingled here
 His sprightly vein with yours—now drop a tear.
 In morals blameless as in manners meek,
 He knew no wish that he might blush to speak,
 But, happy in whatever state below,
 And richer than the rich in being so,
 Obtained the hearts of all, and such a meed
 At length from one, as made him rich indeed.
 Hence, then, ye titles; hence, not wanted here;
 Go, garnish merit in a brighter sphere,
 The brows of those whose more exalted lot
 He could congratulate, but envied not.
 Light lie the turf, good senior! on thy breast,
 And tranquil as thy mind was be thy rest!
 Though, living, thou hadst more desert than fame,
 And not a stone now chronicles thy name.

IN BREVITATEM VITÆ SPATII HOMINIBUS CONCESSI

BY DR. JORTIN

Hæc mihi ! Lege ratâ sol occidit atque resurgit,
 Lunaque mutatæ reparat dispendia formæ,
 Astraque, purpurei telis extincta diei,
 Rursus nocte vigent. Humiles telluris alumni,
 Graminis herba virens, et florum picta propago,
 Quos crudelis hyems lethali tabe peredit,
 Cum Zephyri vox blanda vocat, rediitque sereni
 Temperies anni, fœcundo è cespite surgunt.
 Nos domini rerum, nos, magna et pulchra minati,
 Cum breve ver vitæ robustaque transiit ætas,
 Deficimus ; nec nos ordo revolubilis auras
 Reddit in æthereas, tumuli neque claustra resolvit.

ON THE SHORTNESS OF HUMAN LIFE

TRANSLATION OF THE FOREGOING

SUNS that set, and moons that wane,
 Rise and are restored again ;
 Stars that orient day subdues
 Night at her return renews.
 Herbs and flowers, the beauteous birth
 Of the genial womb of earth,
 Suffer but a transient death
 From the winter's cruel breath.
 Zephyr speaks ; serener skies
 Warm the glebe, and they arise.
 We, alas ! earth's haughty kings,
 We, that promise mighty things,
 Losing soon life's happy prime,
 Droop, and fade, in little time.
 Spring returns, but not our bloom ;
 Still 'tis winter in the tomb.

TRANSLATIONS FROM THE LATIN CLASSICS

THE FIFTH SATIRE OF THE FIRST BOOK OF HORACE

A HUMOROUS DESCRIPTION OF THE AUTHOR'S JOURNEY FROM ROME TO
BRUNDISIUM

'Twas a long journey lay before us
When I and honest Heliodorus,
Who far in point of rhetoric
Surpasses every living Greek,
Each leaving our respective home,
Together sallied forth from Rome.

First at Aricia we alight,
And there refresh and pass the night,
Our entertainment rather coarse
Than sumptuous, but I've met with worse.
Thence o'er the causeway soft and fair
To Appii Forum we repair.
But as this road is well supplied
(Temptation strong !) on either side
With inns commodious, snug, and warm,
We split the journey, and perform
In two days' time what's often done
By brisker travellers in one.

Here rather choosing not to sup
Than with bad water mix my cup,
After a warm debate in spite
Of a provoking appetite,
I sturdily resolve at last
To balk it, and pronounce a fast,
And in a moody humour wait,
While my less dainty comrades bait.

Now o'er the spangled hemisphere
Diffused the starry train appear,
When there arose a desperate brawl ;
The slaves and bargemen, one and all,
Rending their throats (have mercy on us !)
As if they were resolved to stun us.

"Steer the barge this way to the shore!
 I tell you we'll admit no more!
 Plague! will you never be content?"
 Thus a whole hour at least is spent,
 While they receive the several fares,
 And kick the mule into his gears.
 Happy, these difficulties past,
 Could we have fallen asleep at last!
 But, what with humming, croaking, biting,
 Gnats, frogs, and all their plagues uniting,
 These tuneful natives of the lake
 Conspired to keep us broad awake.
 Besides, to make the concert full,
 Two maudlin wights, exceeding dull,
 The bargeman and a passenger
 Each in his turn, essayed an air
 In honour of his absent fair.
 At length the passenger, oppressed
 With wine, left off, and snored the rest.
 The weary bargeman too gave o'er,
 And hearing his companion snore,
 Seized the occasion, fixed the barge,
 Turned out his mule to graze at large,
 And slept forgetful of his charge.

And now the sun o'er eastern hill
 Discovered that our barge stood still;
 When one whose anger vexed him sore,
 With malice fraught, leaps quick on shore,
 Plucks up a stake, with many a thwack
 Assails the mule and driver's back.

Then slowly moving on with pain,
 At ten Feronia's stream we gain,
 And in her pure and glassy wave
 Our hands and faces gladly lave.
 Climbing three miles, fair Anxur's height
 We reach, with stony quarries white.

While here, as was agreed, we wait,
 Till, charged with business of the state,
 Mæcenus and Cocceius come
 (The messengers of peace) from Rome,
 My eyes, by watery humours blear
 And sore, I with black balsam smear.

At length they join us, and with them
 Our worthy friend Fonteius came;
 A man of such complete desert,
 Antony loved him at his heart.
 At Fundi we refused to bait,

And laughed at vain Aufidius' state,
 A prætor now, a scribe before,
 The purple-bordered robe he wore,
 His slave the smoking censer bore.
 Tired, at Muræna's we repose,
 At Formia sup at Capito's.

With smiles the rising morn we greet,
 At Sinuessa pleased to meet
 With Plotius, Varius, and the bard
 Whom Mantua first with wonder heard.
 The world no purer spirits knows,
 For none my heart more warmly glows.
 Oh ! what embraces we bestowed,
 And with what joy our breasts o'erflowed !
 Sure while my sense is sound and clear,
 Long as I live, I shall prefer
 A gay, good-natured, easy friend,
 To every blessing Heaven can send.

At a small village, the next night,
 Near the Vulturnus, we alight ;
 Where, as employed on state affairs,
 We were supplied by the purveyors
 Frankly at once, and without hire,
 With food for man and horse, and fire.
 Capua next day betimes we reach,
 Where Virgil and myself, who each
 Laboured with different maladies,
 His such a stomach, mine such eyes,
 As would not bear strong exercise,
 In drowsy mood to sleep resort ;
 Mæcenas to the tennis-court.
 Next at Cocceius' farm we're treated,
 Above the Caudian tavern seated ;
 His kind and hospitable board
 With choice of wholesome food was stored.

Now, O ye Nine, inspire my lays !
 To nobler themes my fancy raise !
 Two combatants, who scorn to yield
 The noisy, tongue-disputed field,
 Sarmentus and Cicirrus, claim
 A poet's tribute to their fame ;
 Cicirrus of true Oscian breed,
 Sarmentus, who was never freed,
 But ran away. We don't defame him ;
 His lady lives, and still may claim him.
 Thus dignified, in harder fray
 These champions their keen wit display,

And first Sarmentus led the way.
 "Thy locks," quoth he, "so rough and coarse,
 Look like the mane of some wild horse."
 We laugh: Circirrus undismayed,
 "Have at you!" cries, and shakes his head.
 "'Tis well," Sarmentus says, "you've lost
 That horn your forehead once could boast;
 Since maimed and mangled as you are,
 You seem to butt." A hideous scar
 Improved ('tis true) with double grace
 The native horrors of his face.
 Well; after much jocosely said
 Of his grim front, so fiery red,
 (For carbuncles had blotched it o'er,
 As usual on Campania's shore,)
 "Give us," he cried, "since you're so big,
 A sample of the Cyclops' jig!
 Your shanks methinks no buskins ask,
 Nor does your phiz require a mask."
 To this Cicirrus: "In return
 Of you, sir, now I fain would learn,
 When 'twas, no longer deemed a slave,
 Your chains you to the Lares gave.
 For though a scrivener's right you claim,
 Your lady's title is the same.
 But what could make you run away,
 Since, pigmy as you are, each day
 A single pound of bread would quite
 O'erpower your puny appetite?"
 Thus joked the champions, while we laughed,
 And many a cheerful bumper quaffed.
 To Beneventum next we steer;
 Where our good host by over care
 In roasting thrushes lean as mice
 Had almost fallen a sacrifice.
 The kitchen soon was all on fire,
 And to the roof the flames aspire.
 There might you see each man and master
 Striving, amidst this sad disaster,
 To save the supper. Then they came
 With speed enough to quench the flame.
 From hence we first at distance see
 The Apulian hills, well known to me,
 Parched by the sultry western blast;
 And which we never should have past,
 Had not Trivicus by the way
 Received us at the close of day.

But each was forced at entering here
 To pay the tribute of a tear,
 For more of smoke than fire was seen,
 The hearth was piled with logs so green.

From hence in chaises we were carried
 Miles twenty-four, and gladly tarried
 At a small town, whose name my verse
 (So barbarous is it) can't rehearse.

Know it you may by many a sign,
 Water is dearer far than wine.

There bread is deemed such dainty fare
 That every prudent traveller

His wallet loads with many a crust ;

For at Canusium you might just

As well attempt to gnaw a stone

As think to get a morsel down.

That too with scanty streams is fed ;

Its founder was brave Diomed.

Good Varius (ah, that friends must part !)

Here left us all with aching heart.

At Rubi we arrived that day,

Well jaded by the length of way,

And sure poor mortals ne'er were wetter.

Next day no weather could be better ;

No roads so bad ; we scarce could crawl

Along to fishy Barium's wall.

The Egnatians next, who by the rules

Of common sense are knaves or fools,

Made all our sides with laughter heave

Since we with them must needs believe

That incense in their temples burns

And without fire to ashes turns.

To circumcision's bigots tell

Such tales ! for me, I know full well

That in high heaven, unmoved by care,

The gods eternal quiet share :

Nor can I deem their spleen the cause

Why fickle Nature breaks her laws.

Brundusium last we reach : and there

Stop short the Muse and Traveller.

THE NINTH SATIRE OF THE FIRST BOOK OF HORACE

THE DESCRIPTION OF AN IMPERTINENT. ADAPTED TO THE PRESENT TIMES

SAUNTERING along the street one day,
 On trifles musing by the way,
 Up steps a free familiar wight;
 (I scarcely knew the man by sight.)
 "Carlos," he cried, "your hand, my dear.
 Gad, I rejoice to meet you here!
 Pray Heaven I see you well!"—"So, so;
 Even well enough, as times now go.
 The same good wishes, sir, to you"
 Finding he still pursued me close,
 "Sir, you have business, I suppose."—
 "My business, sir, is quickly done,
 'Tis but to make my merit known.
 Sir, I have read"—"O learnèd sir,
 You and your learning I revere."

Then, sweating with anxiety,
 And sadly longing to get free,
 Gods! how I scampered, scuffled for't,
 Ran, halted, ran again, stopped short,
 Beckoned my boy, and pulled him near,
 And whispered nothing in his ear.

Teased with his loose unjointed chat,
 "What street is this? What house is that?
 O Harlow! how I envied thee
 Thy unabashed effrontery,
 Who darest a foe with freedom blame,
 And call a coxcomb by his name!
 When I returned him answer none,
 Obliginglly the fool ran on,
 "I see you're dismally distressed,
 Would give the world to be released,
 But, by your leave, sir, I shall still
 Stick to your skirts, do what you will.
 Pray which way does your journey tend?"
 "Oh! 'tis a tedious way, my friend,
 Across the Thames, the Lord knows where
 I would not trouble you so far."—
 "Well, I'm at leisure to attend you."—
 "Are you?" thought I, "the De'il befriend you!"
 No ass with double panniers racked,
 Oppressed, o'erladen, broken-backed,

As I, nor half so like a fool.
 "Sir, I know little of myself,"
 Proceeds the pert conceited elf,
 "If Gray or Mason you will deem
 Than me more worthy your esteem.
 Poems I write by folios,
 As fast as other men write prose.
 Then I can sing so loud, so clear,
 That Beard cannot with me compare.
 In dancing, too, I all surpass,
 Not Cooke can move with such a grace."
 Here I made shift, with much ado,
 To interpose a word or two.—
 "Have you no parents, sir? No friends,
 Whose welfare on your own depends?"
 "Parents, relations, say you? No.
 They're all disposed of long ago."—
 "Happy to be no more perplexed!
 My fate too threatens, I go next.
 Dispatch me, sir, 'tis now too late,
 Alas! to struggle with my fate!
 Well, I'm convinced my time is come.
 When young, a gipsy told my doom;
 The beldame shook her palsied head,
 As she perused my palm, and said,
 'Of poison, pestilence, or war,
 Gout, stone, defluxion, or catarrh,
 You have no reason to beware.
 Beware the coxcomb's idle prate;
 Chiefly, my son, beware of that;
 Be sure, when you behold him, fly
 Out of all earshot, or you die!'"
 To Rufus' Hall we now drew near,
 Where he was summoned to appear,
 Refute the charge the plaintiff brought,
 Or suffer judgment by default.
 "For Heaven's sake, if you love me, wait
 One moment! I'll be with you straight."
 Glad of a plausible pretence—
 "Sir, I must beg you to dispense
 With my attendance in the court.
 My legs will surely suffer for't."—
 "Nay, prithee, Carlos, stop awhile!"
 "Faith, sir, in law I have no skill.
 Besides, I have no time to spare,
 I must be going, you know where."—

"Well, I protest, I'm doubtful now,
 Whether to leave my suit or you!"—
 "Me, without scruple!" I reply,
 "Me, by all means, sir!"—"No, not I.
Allons, Monsieur!" 'Twere vain, you know,
 To strive with a victorious foe.
 So I reluctantly obey,
 And follow where he leads the way.
 "You and Newcastle are so close;
 Still hand and glove, sir, I suppose?"
 "Newcastle (let me tell you, sir,)
 Has not his equal everywhere."—
 "Well. There indeed your fortune's made!
 Faith, sir, you understand your trade.
 Would you but give me your good word!
 Just introduce me to my lord.
 I should serve charmingly by way
 Of second fiddle, as they say:
 What think you, sir? 'twere a good jest.
 'Slife, we should quickly scout the rest."—
 "Sir, you mistake the matter far,
 We have no second fiddles there.
 Richer than I some folks may be:
 More learned, but it hurts not me.
 Friends though he has of different kind,
 Each has his proper place assigned."
 "Strange matters these, alleged by you!"—
 "Strange they may be, but they are true."—
 "Well, then, I vow, 'tis mighty clever,
 Now I long ten times more than ever
 To be advanced extremely near
 One of his shining character."—
 "Have but the will—there wants no more,
 'Tis plain enough you have the power.
 His easy temper (that's the worst)
 He knows, and is so shy at first.
 But such a cavalier as you—
 Lord, sir, you'll quickly bring him to!"
 "Well; if I fail in my design,
 Sir, it shall be no fault of mine.
 If by the saucy servile tribe
 Denied, what think you of a bribe?
 Shut out to-day, not die with sorrow,
 But try my luck again to-morrow.
 Never attempt to visit him
 But at the most convenient time,
 Attend him on each levee day,

And there my humble duty pay.
 Labour like this our want supplies;
 And they must stoop who mean to rise."

While thus he wittingly harangued,
 For which you'll guess I wished him hanged,
 Campley, a friend of mine, came by,
 Who knew his humour more than I.
 We stop, salute, and—"Why so fast,
 Friend Carlos? whither all this haste?"
 Fired at the thoughts of a reprieve,
 I pinch him, pull him, twitch his sleeve,
 Nod, beckon, bite my lips, wink, pout,
 Do everything but speak plain out:
 While he, sad dog, from the beginning
 Determined to mistake my meaning,
 Instead of pitying my curse,
 By jeering made it ten times worse.
 "Campley, what secret, pray, was that
 You wanted to communicate?"
 "I recollect. But 'tis no matter.—
 Carlos, we'll talk of that hereafter.
 E'en let the secret rest. 'Twill tell
 Another time, sir, just as well."

Was ever such a dismal day?
 Unlucky cur! he steals away,
 And leaves me, half bereft of life,
 At mercy of the butcher's knife;
 When sudden, shouting from afar,
 See his antagonist appear!
 The bailiff seized him quick as thought.
 "Ho, Mr. Scoundrel! Are you caught?
 Sir, you are witness to the arrest,"—
 "Ay, marry, sir, I'll do my best."
 The mob huzzas; away they trudge,
 Culprit and all, before the judge.
 Meanwhile I luckily enough
 (Thanks to Apollo) got clear off.

VIRGIL'S ÆNEID, BOOK VIII. LINE 18

Thus Italy was moved;—nor did the chief
 Æneas in his mind less tumult feel.
 On every side his anxious thought he turns,
 Restless, unfixed, not knowing what to choose.

And as a cistern that in brim of brass
 Confines the crystal flood, if chance the sun
 Smite on it or the moon's resplendent orb,
 The quivering light now flashes on the walls
 Now leaps uncertain to the vaulted roof :
 Such were the wavering motions of his mind. 10
 'Twas night and, weary Nature sunk to rest,
 The birds, the bleating flocks, were heard no more.
 At length, on the cold ground, beneath the damp
 And dewy vault, fast by the river's brink,
 The Father of his country sought repose.
 When lo ! among the spreading poplar boughs,
 Forth from his pleasant stream, propitious rose
 The god of Tiber : clear transparent gauze
 Infolds his loins, his brows with reeds are crowned ;
 And these his gracious words to soothe his care : 20
 " Heaven-born, who bring'st our kindred home again
 " Rescued, and givest eternity to Troy,
 " Long have Laurentum and the Latian plains
 " Expected thee ; behold thy fixed abode.
 " Fear not the threats of war, the storm is passed,
 " The gods appeased. For proof that what thou hearest
 " Is no vain forgery or delusive dream,
 " Beneath the grove that borders my green bank
 " A milk-white swine, with thirty milk-white young,
 " Shall greet thy wondering eyes. Mark well the place ; 30
 " For 'tis thy place of rest, there end thy toils :
 " There, twice ten years elapsed, fair Alba's walls
 " Shall rise, fair Alba, by Ascanius' hand.
 " Thus shall it be ;—now listen, while I teach
 " The means to accomplish these events at hand.
 " The Arcadians here, a race from Pallas sprung,
 " Following Evander's standard and his fate,
 " High on these mountains, a well-chosen spot,
 " Have built a city, for their grandsire's sake
 " Named Pallanteum. These perpetual war 40
 " Wage with the Latians : joined in faithful league
 " And arms confederate, add them to your camp.
 " Myself between my winding banks will speed
 " Your well-oared barks to stem the opposing tide.
 " Rise, goddess-born, arise ; and with the first
 " Declining stars seek Juno in thy prayer,
 " And vanquish all her wrath with suppliant vows.
 " When conquest crowns thee, then remember Me.
 " I am the Tiber, whose cærulean stream
 " Heaven favours ; I with copious flood divide 50
 " These grassy banks, and cleave the fruitful meads ;

And plunged his form beneath the closing flood.

Aeneas at the morning dawn awoke,
And, rising, with uplifted eye beheld
The orient sun, then dipped his palms, and scooped
The brimming stream, and thus addressed the skies :

" Ye nymphs, Laurentian nymphs, who feed the source
" Of many a stream, and thou, with thy blest flood, 60

" O Tiber ! hear, accept me, and afford,

" At length afford, a shelter from my woes.

" Where'er in secret cavern under ground

" Thy waters sleep, where'er they spring to light,

" Since thou hast pity for a wretch like me,

" My offerings and my vows shall wait thee still :

" Great horned Father of Hesperian floods,

" Be gracious now and ratify thy word ! "

He said, and chose two galleys from his fleet,

Fits them with oars, and clothes the crew in arms. 70

When lo ! astonishing and pleasing sight,

The milk-white dam, with her unspotted brood,

Lay stretched upon the bank, beneath the grove.

To thee, the pious prince, Juno, to thee

Devotes them all, all on thine altar bleed.

That livelong night old Tiber smoothed his flood,

And so restrained it that it seemed to stand

Motionless as a pool, or silent lake,

That not a billow might resist their oars.

With cheerful sound of exhortation soon 80

Their voyage they begin ; the pitchy keel

Slides through the gentle deep ; the quiet stream

Admires the unwonted burthen that it bears,

Well polished arms, and vessels painted gay.

Beneath the shade of various trees, between

The umbrageous branches of the spreading groves,

They cut their liquid way, nor day nor night

They slack their course, unwinding as they go

The long meanders of the peaceful tide.

The glowing sun was in meridian height, 90

When from afar they saw the humble walls

And the few scattered cottages, which now

The Roman power has equalled with the clouds ;

But such was then Evander's scant domain.

They steer to shore, and hasten to the town.

It chanced the Arcadian monarch on that day,

Before the walls, beneath a shady grove,

Was celebrating high, in solemn feast,

Alcides and his tutelary gods.

Pallas, his son, was there, and there the chieft
Of all his youth ; with these, a worthy tribe,
His poor but venerable senate, burned
Sweet incense, and their altars smoked with blood.
Soon as they saw the towering masts approach,
Sliding between the trees, while the crew rest
Upon their silent oars, amazed they rose,
Not without fear, and all forsook the feast.
But Pallas, undismayed, his javelin seized,
Rushed to the bank, and from a rising ground
Forbade them to disturb the sacred rites.

100

110

" Ye stranger youth ! what prompts you to explore
" This untried way ? and whither do ye steer ?
" Whence, and who are ye ? Bring ye peace or war ? "

Æneas from his lofty deck holds forth
The peaceful olive branch, and thus replies :

" Trojans and enemies to the Latian state,
" Whom they with unprovoked hostilities
" Have driven away, thou seest. We seek Evander ;
" Say this,—and say beside, the Trojan chiefs
" Are come, and seek his friendship and his aid."

120

Pallas with wonder heard that awful name,
And " Whosoe'er thou art," he cried, " come forth ;
" Bear thine own tidings to my father's ear,
" And be a welcome guest beneath our roof,"
He said, and pressed the stranger to his breast ;
Then led him from the river to the grove,
Where, courteous, thus Æneas greets the king :

" Best of the Grecian race, to whom I bow
" (So wills my fortune) suppliant, and stretch forth
" In sign of amity this peaceful branch,
" I feared thee not, although I knew thee well
" A Grecian leader, born in Arcady,
" And kinsman of the Atridæ. Me my virtue,
" That means no wrong to thee, the Oracles,
" Our kindred families allied of old,
" And thy renown diffused through every land,
" Have all conspired to bind in friendship to thee,
" And send me not unwilling to thy shores.

130

" Dardanus, author of the Trojan state
" (So say the Greeks), was fair Electra's son ;
" Electra boasted Atlas for her sire,
" Whose shoulders high sustain the æthereal orbs.
" Your sire is Mercury, whom Maia bore,
" Sweet Maia, on Cyllene's hoary top.
" Her, if we credit aught tradition old,

140

"Atlas of yore, the scepter'd Atlas, claimed

"His daughter. Thus united close in blood,

"Thy race and ours one common sire confess.

"With these credentials fraught, I would not send

"Ambassadors with artful phrase to sound

150

"And win thee by degrees, but came myself;

"Me, therefore, me thou seest; my life the stake:

"Tis I, Æneas, who implore thine aid.

"Should Daunia, that now aims the blow at thee,

"Prevail to conquer us, nought then, they think,

"Will hinder, but Hesperia must be theirs,

"All theirs, from the upper to the nether sea.

"Take then our friendship, and return us thine!

"We too have courage, we have noble minds,

"And youth well tried and exercised in arms."

160

Thus spoke Æneas. He with fixed regard
Surveyed him speaking, features, form and mien.

Then briefly thus,—"Thou noblest of thy name,

"How gladly do I take thee to my heart,

"How gladly thus confess thee for a friend!

"In thee I trace Anchises; his thy speech,

"Thy voice, thy countenance. For I well remember

"Many a day since, when Priam journeyed forth

"To Salamis, to see the land where dwelt

"Hesione, his sister, he pushed on

170

"E'en to Arcadia's frozen bounds. 'Twas then

"The bloom of youth was glowing on my cheek;

"Much I admired the Trojan chiefs, and much

"Their king, the son of great Laomedon,

"But most Anchises, towering o'er them all.

"A youthful longing seized me to accost

"The hero, and embrace him; I drew near,

"And gladly led him to the walls of Phenæa.

"Departing, he distinguished me with gifts,

"A costly quiver stored with Lycian darts,

180

"A robe inwove with gold, with gold embossed

"Two bridles, those which Pallas uses now.

"The friendly league thou hast solicited

"I give thee therefore, and to-morrow all

"My chosen youth shall wait on your return.

"Meanwhile, since thus in friendship ye are come,

"Rejoice with us, and join to celebrate

"These annual rites, which may not be delayed,

"And be at once familiar at our board."

He said, and bade replace the feast removed;

190

Himself upon a grassy bank disposed

The crew; but for Æneas ordered forth

A couch spread with a lion's tawny shag,
 And bade him share the honours of his throne.
 The appointed youth with glad alacrity
 Assist the labouring priest to load the board
 With roasted entrails of the slaughtered beeves,
 Well-kneaded bread and mantling bowls. Well pleased,
 Æneas and the Trojan youth regale
 On the huge length of a well-pastured chine. 200

Hunger appeased, and tables all despatched,
 Thus spake Evander: "Superstition here,
 "In this our solemn feasting, has no part.
 "No, Trojan friend, from utmost danger saved,
 "In gratitude this worship we renew.
 "Behold that rock which nods above the vale,
 "Those bulks of broken stone dispersed around;
 "How desolate the shattered cave appears,
 "And what a ruin spreads the incumbered plain.
 "Within this pile, but far within, was once 210
 "The den of Cacus; dire his hateful form,
 "That shunned the day, half monster and half man.
 "Blood newly shed streamed ever on the ground
 "Smoking, and many a visage pale and wan,
 "Nailed at his gate, hung hideous to the sight.
 "Vulcan begot the brute: vast was his size,
 "And from his throat he belched his father's fires.
 "But the day came that brought us what we wished,
 "The assistance and the presence of a god.
 "Flushed with his victory and the spoils he won 220
 "From triple-formed Geryon lately slain,
 "The great avenger Hercules appeared.
 "Hither he drove his stately bulls, and poured
 "His herds along the vale. But the sly thief,
 "Cacus, that nothing might escape his hand
 "Of villany or fraud, drove from the stalls
 "Four of the lordliest of his bulls, and four
 "The fairest of his heifers; by the tail
 "He dragged them to his den, that, there concealed,
 "No footsteps might betray the dark abode. 230
 "And now, his herd with provender sufficed,
 "Alcides would be gone; they as they went
 "Still bellowing loud, made the deep-echoing woods
 "And distant hills resound: when hark! one ox,
 "Imprisoned close within the vast recess,
 "Lows in return, and frustrates all his hope.
 "Then fury seized Alcides, and his breast
 "With indignation heaved: grasping his club
 "Of knotted oak, swift to the mountain top

"He ran, he flew. Then first was Cacus seen 240
 "To tremble, and his eyes bespoke his fears.
 "Swift as an eastern blast he sought his den,
 "And dread increasing winged him as he went.
 "Drawn up in iron slings above the gate,
 "A rock was hung enormous. Such his haste,
 "He burst the chains, and dropped it at the door,
 "Then grappled it with ironwork within
 "Of bolts and bars by Vulcan's art contrived.
 "Scarce was he fast, when panting for revenge
 "Came Hercules; he gnashed his teeth with rage, 250
 "And quick as lightning glanced his eyes around,
 "In quest of entrance. Fiery red and stung
 "With indignation, thrice he wheeled his course
 "About the mountain; thrice, but thrice in vain,
 "He strove to force the quarry at the gate,
 "And thrice sat down o'erwearied in the vale.
 "There stood a pointed rock, abrupt and rude,
 "That high o'erlooked the rest, close at the back
 "Of the fell monster's den, where birds obscene
 "Of ominous note resorted, choughs and daws. 260
 "This, as it leaned obliquely to the left,
 "Threatening the stream below, he from the right
 "Pushed with his utmost strength, and to and fro
 "He shook the mass, loosening its lowest base;
 "Then shoved it from its seat; down fell the pile;
 "Sky thundered at the fall; the banks give way,
 "The affrighted stream flows upward to his source.
 "Behold the kennel of the brute exposed,
 "The gloomy vault laid open. So, if chance
 "Earth yawning to the centre should disclose 270
 "The mansions, the pale mansions of the dead,
 "Loathed by the gods, such would the gulf appear,
 "And the ghosts tremble at the sight of day.
 "The monster braying with unusual din
 "Within his hollow lair, and sore amazed
 "To see such sudden inroads of the light,
 "Alcides pressed him close with what at hand
 "Lay readiest, stumps of trees, and fragments huge
 "Of millstone size. He (for escape was none),
 "Wondrous to tell! forth from his gorge discharged 280
 "A smoky cloud that darkened all the den;
 "Wreath after wreath he vomited amain
 "The smothering vapour mixed with fiery sparks:
 "No sight could penetrate the veil obscure.
 "The hero, more provoked, endured not this,
 "But with a headlong leap he rushed to where

"The thickest cloud enveloped his abode ;
 "There grasped he Cacus, spite of all his fires,
 "Till, crushed within his arms, the monster shows
 "His bloodless throat, now dry with panting hard, 290
 "And his pressed eyeballs start. Soon he tears down
 "The barricade of rock, the dark abyss
 "Lies open ; and the imprisoned bulls, the theft
 "He had with oaths denied, are brought to light ;
 "By the heels the miscreant carcase is dragged forth,
 "His face, his eyes, all terrible, his breast
 "Beset with bristles, and his sooty jaws
 "Are viewed with wonder never to be cloyed.
 "Hence the celebrity thou seest, and hence
 "This festal day. Potitius first enjoined 300
 "Posterity these solemn rites ; he first
 "With those who bear the great Pinarian name,
 "To Hercules devoted, in the grove
 "This altar built, deemed sacred in the highest
 "By us, and sacred ever to be deemed.
 "Come then, my friends, and bind your youthful brows
 "In praise of such deliverance, and hold forth
 "The brimming cup ; your deities and ours
 "Are now the same ; then drink, and freely too."
 So saying, he twisted round his reverend locks 310
 A variegated poplar wreath, and filled
 His right hand with a consecrated bowl.
 At once all pour libations on the board,
 All offer prayer. And now, the radiant sphere
 Of day descending, eventide drew near ;
 When first Potitius with the priests advanced,
 Begirt with skins, and torches in their hands.
 High piled with meats of savoury taste, they ranged
 The chargers, and renewed the grateful feast.
 Then came the Salii, crowned with poplar too, 320
 Circling the blazing altars : here the youth
 Advanced, a choir harmonious ; there were heard
 The reverend seers responsive : praise they sung,
 Much praise in honour of Alcides' deeds ;
 How first with infant gripe two serpents huge
 He strangled, sent from Juno ; next they sung
 How Troja and EChalia he destroyed,
 Fair cities both, and many a toilsome task
 Beneath Eurystheus (so his stepdame willed)
 Achieved victorious. "Thou, the cloud-born pair, 330
 "Hylæus fierce and Pholus, monstrous twins,
 "Thou slewest the Minotaur, the plague of Crete,
 "And the vast lion of the Nemean rock.

"Thee Hell, and Cerberus, Hell's porter, feared,
 "Stretched in his den upon his half-gnawed bones.
 "Thee no abhorred form, not even the vast
 "Typhœus, could appal, though clad in arms.
 "Hail, true-born son of Jove, among the gods
 "At length enrolled, nor least illustrious thou,
 "Haste thee propitious, and approve our songs!"— 340

Thus hymned the chorus; above all they sing
 The cave of Cacus, and the flames he breathed.
 The whole grove echoes, and the hills rebound.

The rites performed, all hasten to the town;
 The king, bending with age, held as he went
 Æneas and his Pallas by the hand,
 With much variety of pleasing talk
 Shortening the way. Æneas, with a smile,
 Looks round him, charmed with the delightful scene,
 And many a question asks, and much he learns 350
 Of heroes far renowned in ancient times.

Then spake Evander: "These extensive groves
 "Were once inhabited by fauns and nymphs
 "Produced beneath their shades, and a rude race
 "Of men, the progeny uncouth of elms
 "And knotted oaks. They no refinement knew
 "Of laws or manners civilized, to yoke
 "The steer, with forecast provident to store
 "The hoarded grain, or manage what they had,
 "But browsed like beasts upon the leafy boughs, 360
 "Or fed voracious on their hunted prey.

"An exile from Olympus, and expelled
 "His native realm by thunder-bearing Jove,
 "First Saturn came. He from the mountains drew
 "This herd of men untractable and fierce,
 "And gave them laws; and called his hiding-place,
 "This growth of forests, Latium. Such the peace
 "His land possessed, the golden age was then,
 "So famed in story; till by slow degrees
 "Far other times, and of far different hue, 370
 "Succeeded, thirst of gold and thirst of blood.

"Then came Ausonian bands, and armed hosts
 "From Sicily; and Latium often changed
 "Her master and her name. At length arose
 "Kings, of whom Tybris of gigantic form
 "Was chief; and we Italians since have called
 "The river by his name; thus Albula
 "(So was the country called in ancient days)
 "Was quite forgot. Me from my native land
 "An exile, through the dangerous ocean driven, 380

" Resistless fortune and relentless fate
 " Placed where thou seest me. Phœbus, and
 " The nymph Carmentis, with maternal care
 " Attendant on my wanderings, fixed me here."

[Ten lines omitted.]

He said, and showed him the Tarpeian rock,
 And the rude spot where now the capitol
 Stands all magnificent and bright with gold,
 Then overgrown with thorns. And yet even then
 The swains beheld that sacred scene with awe :
 The grove, the rock, inspired religious fear. 390
 " This grove (he said) that crowns the lofty top
 " Of this fair hill, some deity, we know,
 " Inhabits, but what deity we doubt.
 " The Arcadians speak of Jupiter himself,
 " That they have often seen him, shaking here
 " His gloomy ægis, while the thunder-storms
 " Came rolling all around him. Turn thine eyes,
 " Behold that ruin ; those dismantled walls
 " Were once two towns, Janiculum,
 " By Janus this, and that by Saturn built, 400
 " Saturnia." Such discourse brought them beneath
 The roof of poor Evander ; thence they saw,
 Where now the proud and stately Forum stands,
 The grazing herds wide scattered o'er the field.
 Soon as he entered—" Hercules," he said,
 " Victorious Hercules, on this threshold trod,
 " These walls contained him, humble as they are.
 " Dare to despise magnificence, my friend,
 " Prove thy divine descent by worth divine,
 " Nor view with haughty scorn this mean abode." 410
 So saying, he led Æneas by the hand,
 And placed him on a cushion stuffed with leaves,
 Spread with the skin of a Lybistian bear.

[The Episode of Venus and Vulcan omitted.]

While thus in Lemnos Vulcan was employed,
 Awakened by the gentle dawn of day
 And the shrill song of birds beneath the eaves
 Of his low mansion, old Evander rose.
 His tunic and the sandals on his feet,
 And his good sword well girded to his side,
 A panther's skin dependent from his left, 420
 And over his right shoulder thrown aslant,
 Thus was he clad. Two mastiffs followed him,
 His whole retinue and his nightly guard.

THE SALAD

BY

VIRGIL

THE winter night now well-nigh worn away,
 The wakeful cock proclaimed approaching day
 When Simulus, poor tenant of a farm
 Of narrowest limits, heard the shrill alarm,
 Yawned, stretched his limbs, and anxious to provide
 Against the pangs of hunger unsupplied,
 By slow degrees his tattered bed forsook,
 And poking in the dark explored the nook
 Where embers slept with ashes heaped around,
 And with burnt finger-ends the treasure found.

10

It chanced that from a brand beneath his nose,
 Sure proof of latent fire, some smoke arose ;
 When, trimming with a pin the incrustéd tow,
 And stooping it towards the coal below,
 He toils, with cheeks distended, to excite
 The lingering flame, and gains at length a light.
 With prudent heed he spreads his hand before
 The quivering lamp, and opes his granary door.
 Small was his stock, but, taking for the day
 A measured stint of twice eight pounds away,
 With these his mill he seeks. A shelf at hand,
 Fixt in the wall, affords his lamp a stand :
 Then, baring both his arms, a sleeveless coat
 He girds, the rough exuviæ of a goat ;
 And with a rubber, for that use designed,
 Cleansing his mill within, begins to grind :
 Each hand has its employ ; labouring amain,
 This turns the winch, while that supplies the grain.
 The stone revolving rapidly now glows,
 And the bruised corn a mealy current flows ;
 While he, to make his heavy labour light,
 Tasks oft his left hand to relieve his right ;
 And chants with rudest accent, to beguile
 His ceaseless toil, as rude a strain the while.
 And now " Dame Cybale, come forth ! " he cries ;
 But Cybale, still slumbering, nought replies.

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From Afric she, the swain's sole serving-maid,
 Whose face and form alike her birth betrayed ;
 With woolly locks, lips tumid, sable skin,
 Wide bosom, udders flaccid, belly thin,

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TO DRILL THE GROUND, AND COVER CLOSE THE SEED
AND COULD WITH EASE COMPEL THE WANTON RILL
TO TURN, AND WIND, OBEDIENT TO HIS WILL.
THERE FLOURISHED STARWORT, AND THE BRANCHING
THE SORREL ACID, AND THE MALLOW SWEET,
THE SKIRRET, AND THE LECK'S ASPIRING KIND,
THE NOXIOUS POPPY—QUENCHER OF THE MIND !
SALUBRIOUS SEQUEL OF A SUMPTUOUS BOARD,
THE LETTUCE, AND THE LONG HUGE-BELLIED GOURD
BUT THESE (FOR NONE HIS APPETITE CONTROLLED
WITH STRICTER SWAY) THE THRIFTY RUSTIC SOLD ;
WITH BROOM-TWIGS NEATLY BOUND, EACH KIND AP
HE BORE THEM EVER TO THE PUBLIC MART ;
WHENCE, LADEN STILL, BUT WITH A LIGHTER LOAD.

And with the cheese in compound, to the sight
 Nor wholly green appear, nor wholly white.
 His nostrils oft the forceful fume resent ;
 He cursed full oft his dinner for its scent,
 Or with wry faces, wiping as he spoke
 The trickling tears, cried—" Vengeance on the smoke !" 140
 The work proceeds : not roughly turns he now
 The pestle, but in circles smooth and slow ;
 With cautious hand that grudges what it spills,
 Some drops of olive-oil he next instils ;
 Then vinegar with caution scarcely less ;
 And, gathering to a ball the medley mess,
 Last, with two fingers frugally applied,
 Sweeps the small remnant from the mortar's side :
 And thus, complete in figure and in kind,
 Obtains at length the Salad he designed. 150

And now black Cybale before him stands,
 The cake drawn newly glowing in her hands :
 He glad receives it, chasing far away
 All fears of famine for the passing day ;
 His legs enclosed in buskins, and his head
 In his tough casque of leather, forth he led
 And yoked his steers, a dull obedient pair,
 Then drove afield, and plunged the pointed share.

OVID. TRIST. LIB. V. ELEG. XII

Scribis, ut oblectem.

You bid me write to amuse the tedious hours,
 And save from withering my poetic powers.
 Hard is the task, my friend, for verse should flow
 From the free mind, not fettered down by woe.
 Restless amidst unceasing tempests tossed,
 Whoe'er has cause for sorrow, I have most.
 Would you bid Priam laugh, his sons all slain,
 Or childless Niobe from tears refrain,
 Join the gay dance, and lead the festive train ?
 Does grief or study most befit the mind, 10
 To this remote, this barbarous nook confined ?
 Could you impart to my unshaken breast
 The fortitude by Socrates possessed,
 Soon would it sink beneath such woes as mine ;

For what is human strength to wrath divine ?
 Wise as he was, and Heaven pronounced him so,
 My sufferings would have laid that wisdom low.
 Could I forget my country, thee and all,
 And even the offence to which I owe my fall,
 Yet fear alone would freeze the poet's vein, 20
 While hostile troops swarm o'er the dreary plain.
 Add that the fatal rust of long disuse
 Unfits me for the service of the Muse.
 Thistles and weeds are all we can expect
 From the best soil impoverished by neglect ;
 Unexercised, and to his stall confined,
 The fleetest racer would be left behind ;
 The best built bark that cleaves the watery way,
 Laid useless by, would moulder and decay ;—
 No hope remains that time shall me restore, 30
 Mean as I was, to what I was before.
 Think how a series of desponding cares
 Benumbs the genius and its force impairs.
 How oft, as now, on this devoted sheet,
 My verse, constrained to move with measured feet,
 Reluctant and laborious limps along,
 And proves itself a wretched exile's song.
 What is it tunes the most melodious lays ?
 'Tis emulation and the thirst of praise ;
 A noble thirst, and not unknown to me, 40
 While smoothly wafted on a calmer sea.
 But can a wretch like Ovid pant for fame ?
 No, rather let the world forget my name.
 Is it because that world approved my strain,
 You prompt me to the same pursuit again ?
 No, let the Nine the ungrateful truth excuse,
 I charge my hopeless ruin on the Muse,
 And, like Perillus, meet my just desert,
 The victim of my own pernicious art.
 Fool that I was to be so warned in vain, 50
 And, shipwrecked once, to tempt the deep again !
 Ill fares the bard in this unlettered land,
 None to consult, and none to understand.
 The purest verse has no admirers here,
 Their own rude language only suits their ear.
 Rude as it is, at length familiar grown,
 I learn it, and almost unlearn my own.
 Yet to say truth, even here the Muse disdains
 Confinement, and attempts her former strains,
 But finds the strong desire is not the power, 60
 And what her taste condemns the flames devour.

A part, perhaps, like this, escapes the doom,
 And, though unworthy, finds a friend at Rome;
 But oh the cruel art, that could undo
 Its votary thus! would that could perish too!

HOR. LIB. I. ODE IX

Vides, ut altâ stet nive candidum
 Soracte; . . .

SEEST thou yon mountain laden with deep snow,
 The groves beneath their fleecy burthen bow,
 The streams, congealed, forget to flow?
 Come, thaw the cold, and lay a cheerful pile
 Of fuel on the hearth;
 Broach the best cask, and make old winter smile
 With seasonable mirth.

This be our part,—let heaven dispose the rest;
 If Jove command, the winds shall sleep
 That now wage war upon the foamy deep,
 And gentle gales spring from the balmy west.

Even let us shift to-morrow as we may;
 When to-morrow's passed away,
 We at least shall have to say
 We have lived another day;
 Your auburn locks will soon be silvered o'er,
 Old age is at our heels, and youth returns no more.

HOR. LIB. I. ODE XXXVIII

Persicos odi, puer, apparatus.

Boy, I hate their empty shows,
 Persian garlands I detest,
 Bring not me the late-blown rose,
 Lingering after all the rest.

Plainer myrtle pleases me,
 Thus outstretched beneath my vine,
 Myrtle more becoming thee,
 Waiting with thy master's wine.

ANOTHER TRANSLATION OF THE SAME ODE

[English Sapphics have been attempted, but with little success, because in our language we have no certain rules by which to determine the quantity. The following version was made merely in the way of experiment how far it might be possible to imitate Latin Sapphic in English without any attention to that circumstance.]

Boy! I detest all Persian fopperies,
 Fillet-bound garlands are to me disgusting;
 Task not thyself with any search, I charge thee,
 Where latest roses linger.

Bring me alone (for thou wilt find that readily)
 Plain myrtle. Myrtle neither will disparage
 Thee occupied to serve me, or me drinking
 Beneath my vine's cool shelter.

HOR. LIB. II. ODE XV

Otium Divos rogat in patenti.

EASE is the weary merchant's prayer,
 Who ploughs by night the Ægean flood,
 When neither moon nor stars appear,
 Or faintly glimmer through the cloud.

For ease the Mede with quiver graced,
 For ease the Thracian hero sighs;
 Delightful ease all pant to taste,
 A blessing which no treasure buys.

For neither gold can lull to rest,
 Nor all a Consul's guard beat off
 The tumults of a troubled breast,
 The cares that haunt a gilded roof.

Happy the man whose table shows
 A few clean ounces of old plate;
 No fear intrudes on his repose,
 No sordid wishes to be great.

Poor short-lived things, what plans we lay !
Ah, why forsake our native home,
To distant climates speed away ?
For self sticks close where'er we roam !

Care follows hard, and soon o'ertakes
The well-rigged ship, the warlike steed ;
Her destined quarry ne'er forsakes ;
Not the wind flies with half her speed.

From anxious fears of future ill
Guard well the cheerful, happy Now ;
Gild e'en your sorrows with a smile,
No blessing is unmixed below.

Thy neighing steeds and lowing herds,
Thy numerous flocks around thee graze,
And the best purple Tyre affords
Thy robe magnificent displays.

On me indulgent Heaven bestowed
A rural mansion, neat and small ;
This lyre ;—and as for yonder crowd,
The happiness to hate them all.

EPIGRAMS, TRANSLATED FROM THE LATIN OF OWEN

ON ONE IGNORANT AND ARROGANT

THOU mayst of double ignorance boast,
Who know'st not that thou nothing know'st.

PRUDENT SIMPLICITY

THAT thou mayst injure no man dove-like be,
And serpent-like that none may injure thee !

TO A FRIEND IN DISTRESS

I WISH thy lot, now bad, still worse, my friend ;
For when at worst, they say, things always mend.

RETALIATION

THE works of ancient bards divine,
Aulus, thou scorn'st to read ;
And should posterity read thine,
It would be strange indeed !

SELF-KNOWLEDGE

WHEN little more than boy in age
I deemed myself almost a sage ;
But now seem worthier to be styled,
For ignorance, almost a child.

SUNSET AND SUNRISE

CONTEMPLATE, when the sun declines,
Thy death, with deep reflection ;
And when again he rising shines,
Thy day of resurrection !

TRANSLATIONS OF GREEK VERSES

FROM THE GREEK OF JULIANUS

A SPARTAN, his companions slain,
 Alone from battle fled :
 His mother, kindling with disdain
 That she had borne him, struck him dead :
 For courage, and not birth alone,
 In Sparta, testifies a son !

ON THE SAME, BY PALLADAS

A SPARTAN 'scaping from the fight,
 His mother met him in his flight,
 Upheld a falchion to his breast,
 And thus the fugitive addressed :
 " Thou canst but live to blot with shame
 " Indelible thy mother's name,
 " While every breath that thou shalt draw
 " Offends against thy country's law :
 " But, if thou perish by this hand,
 " Myself indeed throughout the land,
 " To my dishonour, shall be known
 " The mother still of such a son ;
 " But Sparta will be safe and free,
 " And that shall serve to comfort me."

AN EPITAPH

My name—my country—what are they to thee ?
 What, whether base or proud my pedigree ?
 Perhaps I far surpassed all other men ;
 Perhaps I fell below them all ; what then ?
 Suffice it, stranger ! that thou seest a tomb !
 Thou know'st its use ; it hides—no matter whom.

ANOTHER

*TAKE to thy bosom, gentle Earth ! a swain
With much hard labour in thy service worn ;
set the vines that clothe yon ample plain,
and he these olives that the vale adorn.*

*'led with grain the glebe ; the rills he led
ugh this green herbage, and those fruitful bowers ;
herefore, Earth ! lie lightly on his head,
ary head, and deck his grave with flowers.*

ANOTHER

*this likeness is too strong,
all mourn the dead too long.*

ANOTHER

*winters' end I died,
eing, sole and sad ;
I never tied,
ther never had.*

ACHUS

*funereal bier
'at eventide,
lear,
ning sister died.*

*oble race,
,
' more to embrace,
' woe.*

BEWAIL not much, my parents ! me, the prey
 Of ruthless Hades, and sepulchred here.
 An infant, in my fifth scarce finished year,
 He found all sportive, innocent, and gay,
 Your young Callimachus ; and if I knew
 Not many joys, my griefs were also few.

BY HERACLIDES

IN Cnidus born, the consort I became
 Of Euphron. Aretimias was my name.
 His bed I shared, nor proved a barren bride,
 But bore two children at a birth, and died.
 One child I leave to solace and uphold
 Euphron hereafter, when infirm and old,
 And one, for his remembrance sake, I bear
 To Pluto's realm, till he shall join me there.

ON THE REED

I WAS of late a barren plant,
 Useless, insignificant,
 Nor fig, nor grape, nor apple bore,
 A native of the marshy shore ;
 But, gathered for poetic use,
 And plunged into a sable juice,
 Of which my modicum I sip
 With narrow mouth and slender lip,
 At once, although by nature dumb,
 All eloquent I have become,
 And speak with fluency untired,
 As if by Phœbus' self inspired.

TO HEALTH

ELDEST born of powers divine !
 Blest Hygeia ! be it mine
 To enjoy what thou canst give,
 And henceforth with thee to live :

For in power if pleasure be,
Wealth or numerous progeny,
Or in amorous embrace
Where no spy infests the place ;
Or in aught that Heaven bestows
To alleviate human woes
When the wearied heart despairs
Of a respite from its cares ;
These and every true delight
Flourish only in thy sight ;
And the sister Graces three
Owe, themselves, their youth to thee,
Without whom we may possess
Much, but never happiness.

ON INVALIDS

FAR happier are the dead, methinks, than they
Who look for death, and fear it every day.

ON THE ASTROLOGERS

THE astrologers did all alike presage
My uncle's dying in extreme old age ;
One only disagreed. But he was wise,
And spoke not till he heard the funeral cries.

ON AN OLD WOMAN

MYCILLA dyes her locks, 'tis said ;
But 'tis a foul aspersion :
She buys them black ; they therefore need
No subsequent immersion.

ON FLATTERERS

No mischief worthier of our fear
In nature can be found
Than friendship, in ostent sincere,
But hollow and unsound ;
For lulled into a dangerous dream
We close infold a foe,
Who strikes, when most secure we seem,
The inevitable blow.

ON A TRUE FRIEND

HAST thou a friend ? Thou hast indeed
A rich and large supply,
Treasure to serve your every need,
Well managed, till you die.

TO THE SWALLOW

ATTIC maid ! with honey fed,
Bear'st thou to thy callow brood
Yonder locust from the mead,
Destined their delicious food ?

Ye have kindred voices clear,
Ye alike unfold the wing,
Migrate hither, sojourn here,
Both attendant on the spring !

Ah, for pity drop the prize ;
Let it not with truth be said
That a songster gasps and dies
That a songster may be fed.

ON LATE-ACQUIRED WEALTH

POOR in my youth, and in life's later scenes
Rich to no end, I curse my natal hour,
Who nought enjoyed while young, denied the means ;
And nought when old enjoyed, denied the power.

ON A BATH, BY PLATO

DID Cytherea to the skies
From this pellucid lymph arise ?
Or was it Cytherea's touch,
When bathing here, that made it such ?

ON A FOWLER, BY ISIODORUS

WITH seeds and birdlime, from the desert air,
Eumelus gathered free, though scanty, fare.
No lordly patron's hand he deigned to kiss,
Nor luxury knew, save liberty, nor bliss.
Thrice thirty years he lived, and to his heirs
His seeds bequeathed, his birdlime, and his snares.

ON NIOBE

CHARON ! receive a family on board,
Itself sufficient for thy crazy yawl ;
Apollo and Diana, for a word
By me too proudly spoken, slew us all.

ON A GOOD MAN

TRAVELLER, regret me not ; for thou shalt find
Just cause of sorrow none in my decease,
Who, dying, children's children left behind,
And with one wife lived many a year in peace :
Three virtuous youths espoused my daughters three,
And oft their infants in my bosom lay,
Nor saw I one, of all derived from me,
Touched with disease, or torn by death away.
Their duteous hands my funeral rites bestowed,
And me, by blameless manners fitted well
To seek it, sent to the serene abode
Where shades of pious men for ever dwell.

ON A MISER

THEY call thee rich !—I deem thee poor ;
Since, if thou darest not use thy store,
But savest it only for thine heirs,
The treasure is not thine, but theirs.



Where prolific nature yields
Nought that, willingly as she,
Man surrenders not to thee.
For hostility or hate
None thy pleasures can create.
Thee it satisfies to sing
Sweetly the return of spring,
Herald of the genial hours,
Harming neither herbs nor flowers.
Therefore man thy voice attends
Gladly,—thou and he are friends ;
Nor thy never-ceasing strains
Phœbus or the Muse disdains
As too simple or too long,
For themselves inspire the song.
Earth-born, bloodless, undecaying,
Ever singing, sporting, playing,
What has nature else to show
Godlike in its kind as thou ?

ON HERMOCRATIA

HERMOCRATIA named—save only one,
Twice fifteen births I bore, and buried none ;
For neither Phœbus pierced my thriving joys,
Nor Dian—she my girls, or he my boys.
But Dian rather, when my daughters lay
In parturition, chased their pangs away.
And all my sons, by Phœbus' bounty, shared
A vigorous youth, by sickness unimpaired.
O Niobe ! far less prolific ! see
Thy boast against Latona shunned by me !

FROM MENANDER

Fond youth ! who dream'st that hoarded gold
Is needful, not alone to pay
For all thy various items sold,
To serve the wants of every day ;
Bread, vinegar, and oil, and meat,
For savoury viands seasoned high ;
But somewhat more important yet—
I tell thee what it cannot buy.

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ON A SIMILAR CHARACTER

You give your cheeks a rosy stain,
With washes dye your hair ;
But paint and washes both are vain
To give a youthful air.

Those wrinkles mock your daily toil,
No labour will efface 'em,
You wear a mask of smoothest oil,
Yet still with ease we trace 'em.

An art so fruitless then forsake,
Which though you much excel in,
You never can contrive to make
Old Hecuba young Helen.

ON AN UGLY FELLOW

BEWARE, my friend ! of crystal brook,
Or fountain, lest that hideous hook,
Thy nose, thou chance to see ;
Narcissus' fate would then be thine,
And self-detested thou wouldst pine,
As self-enamoured he.

ON A BATTERED BEAUTY

HAIR, wax, rouge, honey, teeth you buy,
A multifarious store !
A mask at once would all supply,
Nor would it cost you more.

ON A THIEF

WHEN Aulus, the nocturnal thief, made prize
Of Hermes, swift-winged envoy of the skies,
Hermes, Arcadia's king, the thief divine,
Who when an infant stole Apollo's kine,

ACHILLES, HE CRIES, YOU MEET NO NEW MISSESSA,
"Oft-times the pupil goes beyond his master."

ON PEDIGREE

FROM EPICHRMUS

My mother ! if thou love me, name no more
My noble birth ! Sounding at every breath
My noble birth, thou kill'st me. Thither fly,
As to their only refuge, all from whom
Nature withholds all good besides ; they boast
Their noble birth, conduct us to the tombs
Of their forefathers, and from age to age
Ascending, trumpet their illustrious race :
But whom hast thou beheld, or canst thou name,
Derived from no forefathers ? Such a man
Lives not ; for how could such be born at all ?
And if it chance that, native of a land
Far distant, or in infancy deprived
Of all his kindred, one, who cannot trace
His origin, exist, why deem him sprung
From baser ancestry than theirs who can ?
My mother ! he whom nature at his birth
Endowed with virtuous qualities, although
An Æthiop and a slave, is nobly born.

ON ENVY

PITY, says the Theban bard,
From my wishes I discard ;
Envy, let me rather be,
Rather far, a theme for thee !
Pity to distress is shown,
Envy to the great alone.
So the Theban : but to shine
Less conspicuous be mine !
I prefer the golden mean,
Pomp and penury between ;

For alarm and peril wait
Ever on the loftiest state,
And the lowest, to the end,
Obloquy and scorn attend.

BY MOSCHUS

I SLEPT when Venus entered : to my bed
A Cupid in her beauteous hand she led,
A bashful seeming boy, and thus she said :
“ Shepherd, receive my little one ! I bring
“ An untaught love, whom thou must teach to sing.”
She said, and left him. I, suspecting nought,
Many a sweet strain my subtle pupil taught,
How reed to reed Pan first with osier bound,
How Pallas formed the pipe of softest sound,
How Hermes gave the lute, and how the quire
Of Phœbus owe to Phœbus’ self the lyre.
Such were my themes ; my themes nought heeded he,
But ditties sang of amorous sort to me,
The pangs that mortals and immortals prove
From Venus’ influence, and the darts of love.
Thus was the teacher by the pupil taught ;
His lessons I retained, and mine forgot.

BY PHILEMON

OFF we enhance our ills by discontent,
And give them bulk beyond what Nature meant.
A parent, brother, friend deceased, to cry,
“ He’s dead indeed, but he was born to die ”—
Such temperate grief is suited to the size
And burthen of the loss ; is just and wise.
But to exclaim, “ Ah ! wherefore was I born,
“ Thus to be left for ever thus forlorn ? ”
Who thus laments his loss invites distress,
And magnifies a woe that might be less,
Through dull despondence to his lot resigned
And leaving reason’s remedy behind.

TRANSLATION OF AN EPIGRAM OF HOMER

PAY me my price, potters ! and I will sing.
Attend, O Pallas ! and with lifted arm
Protect their oven ; let the cups and all
The sacred vessels blacken well, and, baked
With good success, yield them both fair renown
And profit, whether in the market sold
Or streets, and let no strife ensue between us.
But oh, ye potters ! if with shameless front
Ye falsify your promise, then I leave
No mischief uninvoked to avenge the wrong.
Come Syntrips, Smaragus, Sabactes, come,
And Asbetus ; nor let your direst dread,
Omodamus, delay ! Fire seize your house !
May neither house nor vestibule escape !
May ye lament to see confusion mar
And mingle the whole labour of your hands,
And may a sound fill all your oven, such
As of a horse grinding his provender,
While all your pots and flagons bounce within.
Come hither also, daughter of the sun,
Circe the sorceress, and with thy drugs
Poison themselves, and all that they have made !
Come also, Chiron, with thy numerous troop
Of Centaurs, as well those who died beneath
The club of Hercules, as who escaped,
And stamp their crockery to dust ; down fall
Their chimney ; let them see it with their eyes,
And howl to see the ruin of their art,
While I rejoice ; and if a potter stoop
To peep into his furnace, may the fire
Flash in his face and scorch it, that all men
Observe, thenceforth, equity and good faith.

TRANSLATIONS OF ENGLISH VERSES

FROM THE FABLES OF GAY

LEPUS MULTIS AMICUS

Lusus amicitia est, uni nisi dedita, ceu fit,
Simplice ni nexus fœdere, lusus amor.
Incerto genitore puer, non sæpe paternæ
Tutamen novit deliciasque domûs :
Quique sibi fidos fore multos sperat, amicus
Mirum est huic misero si ferat ullus opem.

Comis erat, mitisque, et nolle et velle paratus
Cum quovis, Gaii more modoque, Lepus.
Ille, quot in sylvis et quot spatiantur in agris
Quadrupedes, nôrat conciliare sibi ;
Et quisque innocuo invitoque lacescere quenquam
Labra tenus saltem fidus amicus erat.

10

Ortum sub lucis dum pressa cubilia linquit,
Rorantes herbas, pabula sueta, petens,
Venatorum audit clangores ponè sequentum,
Fulmineumque sonum territus erro fugit.
Corda pavor pulsat, sursum sedet, erigit aures,
Respicit, et sentit jam prope adesse necem.

Utque canes fallat, latè circumvagus, illuc,
Unde abiit, mirâ calliditate redit ;

20

Viribus at fractis tandem se projicit ultro
In mediâ miserum semianimemque viâ.
Vix ibi stratus, equi sonitum pedis audit, et, oh spe
Quam lætâ adventu cor agitur equi !
Dorsum (inquit) mihi, chare, tuum concede, tuoque
Auxilio nares fallere vimque canum.

Me meus, ut nôsti, pes prodit—fidus amicus
Fert quodcunque lubens, nec grave sentit, onus.
Belle miselle lepuscule (equus respondet), amara
Omnia quæ tibi sunt, sunt et amara mihi.

30

Verum age—sume animos—multi me pone bonique
Adveniunt, quorum sis citò salvus ope.

Proximus armenti dominus bos sollicitatus
 Auxilium his verbis se dare posse negat.
 Quando quadrupedum, quot vivunt, nullus amicum
 Me nescire potest usque fuisse tibi,
 Libertate æquus, quam cedit amicus amico,
 Utar, et absque metu ne tibi displiceam ;
 Hinc me mandat amor. Juxta istum messis acervum
 Me mea, præ cunctis chara, juvenca manet ; 40
 Et quis non ultro quæcunque negotia linquit,
 Pareat ut dominæ, cum vocat ipsa, suæ !
 Neu me crudelem dicas—discedo—sed hircus,
 Cujus ope effugias integer, hircus adest.
 Febrem (ait hircus) habes. Heu, sicca ut lumina languent !
 Utque caput, collo deficiente, jacet !
 Hirsutum mihi tergum ; et forsân læserit ægrum ;
 Vellere eris melius fultus, ovisque venit.
 Me mihi fecit onus natura, ovis inquit, anhelans
 Sustineo lanæ pondera tanta meæ ; 50
 Me nec velocem nec fortem jacto, solentque
 Nos etiam sævi dilacerare canes.
 Ultimus accedit vitulus, vitulumque precatur
 Ut periturum alias ocyus eripiat.
 Remne ego, respondet vitulus, suscepere tantam,
 Non depulsus adhuc ubere, natus heri ?
 Te, quem maturi canibus validique relinquunt,
 Incolumem potero reddere parvus ego ?
 Præterea, tollens quem illi aversantur, amicis
 Forte parum videar consuluisse meis. 60
 Ignoscas oro. Fidissima dissociantur
 Corda, et tale tibi sat liquet esse meum.
 Ecce autem ad calces canis est ! te quanta perempto
 Tristitia est nobis ingruitura !—Vale !

AVARUS ET PLUTUS

Icta fenestra Euri flatu stridebat, avarus
 Ex somno trepidus surgit, opumque memor.
 Lata silenter humi ponit vestigia, quemque
 Respicit ad sonitum respiciensque tremit ;
 Angustissima quæque foramina lampade visit,
 Ad vectes, obices, fertque refertque manum.
 Dein reserat crebris junctam compagibus arcam,
 Exultansque omnes conspicit intus opes.

Sed tandem furiis ultatricibus actus ob artes
 Queis sua res tenuis creverat in cumulum, 10
 Contortis manibus nunc stat, nunc pectora pulsans
 Aurum execratur, perniciemque vocat;
 O mihi, ait, misero mens quam tranquilla fuisset,
 Hoc celâset adhuc si modo terra malum!
 Nunc autem virtus ipsa est venalis; et aurum
 Quid contra vitii tormina sæva valet?
 O inimicum aurum! O homini infestissima pestis,
 Cui datur illecebras vincere posse tuas?
 Aurum homines suasit contemnere quicquid honestum est,
 Et præter nomen nil retinere boni. 20
 Aurum cuncta mali per terras semina sparsit;
 Aurum nocturnis furibus arma dedit.
 Bella docet fortes, timidosque ad pessima ducit,
 Fœdifragas artes, multiplicesque dolos,
 Nec vitii quicquam est, quod non inveneris ortum
 Ex malesuadâ auri sacrilegâque fame.
 Dixit, et ingemuit; Plutusque suum sibi numen
 Ante oculos, irâ fervidus, ipse stetit.
 Arcam clausit avarus, et ora horrentia rugis
 Ostendens, tremulum sic Deus increpuit. 30
 Questibus his raucis mihi cur, stulte, obstrepis aures?
 Ista tui similis tristitia quisque canit.
 Commaculavi egone humanum genus, improbe? Culpa,
 Dum rapis, et captas omnia, culpa tua est.
 Mene execrandum censes, quia tam pretiosa
 Criminibus fiunt pernicioiosa tuis?
 Virtutis specie, pulchro ceu pallio amictus
 Quisque catus nebulo sordida facta tegit.
 Atque suis manibus commissâ potentia durum
 Et dirum subito vergit ad imperium. 40
 Hinc, nimium dum latro aurum detrudit in arcam,
 Idem aurum latet in pectore pestis edax;
 Nutrit avaritiam et fastum, suspendere adunco
 Suadet naso inopes, et vitium omne docet.
 Auri at larga probo si copia contigit, instar
 Roris dilapsi ex æthere cuncta beat:
 Tum, quasi numen inesset, alit, foveat, educat orbos,
 Et viduas lacrymis ora rigare vetat.
 Quo sua crimina jure auro derivet avarus,
 Aurum animæ pretium qui cupit atque capit? 50
 Lege pari gladium incuset sicarius atrox
 Cæso homine, et ferrum judicet esse reum.

NOTES

COWPER

FROM A MINIATURE BY WILLIAM BLAKE AFTER THE PORTRAIT BY GEORGE ROMNEY

2

3

4

5

his edition of the *Letters*, vol. i. 10, than in the "Unpublished Poems." The piece called "A Thunderstorm" I have omitted because, in spite of Mr. Wright's confidence in it (*Life of Cowper*, 177), I do not believe it to be Cowper's work. It came to Mr. Wright from the Rev. William Barker, of Hastings, whose mother's name was Travel. It is said that Cowper was overtaken by a storm at the house of a farmer of that name near Olney, and that while taking shelter he wrote the lines in question, of which Mr. Travel took a copy. But no original exists, and I think most of those who read the verses will come to the conclusion that they are not the work of Cowper. Very possibly Cowper did take shelter in Mr. Travel's house, and very possibly some one wrote some verses on that or some other thunderstorm; and then, when the story was forgotten and the verses were found, perhaps long after, the most obvious author to receive the glory of them, and in doing so to confer a glory on the Travel family, was, of course, the local poet, Cowper. But the legend will hardly survive an examination of the lines. Cowper sometimes wrote very badly; but he did not write like the opening lines of this performance:—

*"The sky begins to lower and thickening clouds
Portend a speedy storm, the vocal tribes
No longer sonnets sing; all, all are mute;
The beasts forbear to graze and seek the shade:
Yon herd of swine, see, see how fast they run;
'Tis said they see the wind."*

Or like those later lines:—

*"E'en my dog
Cowers at my feet and looks up for protection,
And now 'tis dreadful truly—Heaven and Earth
How hard it rains! the Atmosphere's on fire!
Chaos presides! Confusion quite surrounds me!"*

It seems unnecessary to quote more.

It should be added that the "Welborne MSS." referred to in the following Notes are those left by John Johnson and now in the possession of the Rev. Henry Barham Johnson at Welborne Rectory, while the "Ash MSS." are those kindly lent to me by Mr. E. P. Ash, and those called the "Hill MSS." are the letters to Joseph Hill, lately the property of Mr. Edward Jekyll, and now of the Rev. Canon Cowper Johnson. The MSS. are all in the poet's hand, except where otherwise stated.

NOTES TO INTRODUCTION

P. lxii. Mattishall Green was the residence of Mrs. Bodham, who gave Cowper his mother's picture, and afterwards of William Bodham Donne, the Censor of plays and friend of Edward FitzGerald.

P. lxvii. For Sir John Fenn see note to these lines on page 488.

P. lxxi. (Letter of June 4, 1793.) The Bishop of B. here alluded to

is Spencer Madan (1758-1836), younger brother of Martin Madan, the author of *Thelyphthora*, and first cousin of Cowper. He became Bishop of Bristol in 1792, and was translated to Peterborough in 1794. He was a Bishop of great piety, simplicity, and even austerity of life, and of an activity in the discharge of his Episcopal duties far beyond what was common in his day.

P. lxxxiii. Blithfield was the house of his friend Walter Bagot. See note to page 477. Who the friends were who wished to be his hosts in Bath and Normandy, I do not know.

P. lxxxix. For Dr. Darwin, see note to the lines addressed to him on p. 490.

NOTES

P. 1. Of the thirty-four pieces here classed as *Early Poems*, the largest and most important section, those referring to his love of Delia (Theodora Cowper) were first printed in *Poems, the Early Productions of William Cowper, Now first published from the originals in the possession of James Croft*, 1825. The manuscripts of these, and of the other pieces which Croft printed, came to him from the executors of a lady to whom Theodora Cowper had sent them in a sealed packet with directions that it was not to be opened till after her death. This lady died a little before Theodora Cowper, whose death took place in October, 1824. The "Delia" poems, hitherto as a rule interspersed among the other "Early Poems," are here brought together and placed in what appears to be their probable chronological order. Croft had apparently no qualifications for his task except that of having married Theodora Cowper's niece. His editing is careless in every way, and not least in interrupting the series of love poems by other pieces which have no connection with it. The titles here prefixed to them are those printed by Croft where he prints any. For those on pages 16 and 17, the second of the two on page 18, and those on pages 22 and 24, I am responsible. The other pieces that come from this collection of Theodora Cowper's, and first appear in Croft's book, are those given on pp. 2-7 inclusive, the lines headed *Of Himself*, *The Certainty of Death*, and the *Translation of Psalm CXXXVII*. The opening verses written at Bath were given first by Hayley (i. 21), who also gave the Epistle to Lloyd, the lines which begin "Doomed, as I am," and several stanzas of the Ode on Sir Charles Grandison. (Hayley, i. 12, 15, 20.) The poem on the Prayer for Indifference was first printed in John Johnson's edition in 1815. For the four remaining pieces, *To Joseph Hill*, *Lines written under the Influence of Delirium*, *A Song of Mercy*, and *Die Ultimo*, 1774, see the special notes. The translations of two of the Satires of Horace, which have generally been given with the other pieces written during Cowper's London period, I have thought it more convenient to place with the rest of the Latin translations. The translation of the Psalm, however, retains its place with the poems that come from Croft's book.

With these Early Poems all the editors have printed as Cowper's the *Pindaric Ode* given below. It was Southey who first ascribed it to Cowper. In the first volume of his edition (p. 95), after mentioning the Dissertation on the Modern Ode which appears signed with Cowper's initials in the *St. James Magazine* in April, 1763, and promises a perfect ode to be composed according to the directions given, he argues that this ode, which appeared in November of the same year, is "evidently by the same person, though signed with a different initial." Mr. Bell has followed Southey in confidently asserting that the ode is Cowper's. Other editors have printed it, though apparently with less confidence. But the true author is undoubtedly Lloyd. For, in the first place, it is signed with the initial L., and it is absurd to suppose that Cowper after using his own initial for the Dissertation would use an L. to sign the ode it promised. But the absolutely conclusive proof lies in a comparison of this ode with the acknowledged works of Lloyd, such as the *Ode to Genius*. When that is done, it is at once plain that both style and subject are exactly his. The sneering allusion to the poets of "Granta's shore" is natural enough in the mouth of the author of the parodies of Gray, but not at all likely to come from so great an admirer of Gray as Cowper; and the whole complaint that poetry is become a mere affair of mechanical rhyme is the burden of both pieces. The Pindaric Ode, alleged to be Cowper's, contrasts the former poets, inspired by "Fancy, bright ærial maid" with the "sons of modern Rime, Mechanic dealers in sublime." Lloyd's *Ode to Genius* calls upon Genius as one who

"look'st with high disdain
Upon the dull mechanic train."

When I add that the very same phrase "Fancy, bright ærial maid" occurs in both, it will, I think, be admitted to be clear that both are by the same author. And that author is Lloyd. I have, therefore, felt bound to deprive it of the place it has hitherto held among the works of Cowper, while giving it with this note that students may form their own opinion of it.

AN ODE

SECUNDUM ARTEM

I

Shall I begin with *Ah*, or *Oh*?
Be sad? *Oh*! yes. Be glad? *Ah*! no.
Light subjects suit not grave Pindaric ode,
Which walks in metre down the Strophic road.
But let the sober matron wear
Her own mechanic sober air:

3

The lark shall soar in every Ode,
 With flowers of light description strewed ;
 And sweetly, warbling Philomel, shall flow
 Thy soothing sadness in mechanic woe.
 Trim epithets shall spread their gloss,
 While every call's o'ergrown with moss :
 Here oaks shall rise in chains of ivy bound,
 There mouldering stones o'erspread the rugged ground.
 Here forests brown, and azure hills,
 There babbling fountains, and prattling rills ;
 Here some gay river floats in crispèd streams,
 While the bright sun now gilds his morning beams,
 Or sinking to his Thetis' breast,
 Drives in description down the west.
 Oh let me boast, with pride-becoming skill,
 I crown the summit of Parnassus' hill :
 While Taste with Genius shall dispense,
 And sound shall triumph over sense ;
 O'er the gay mead with curious steps I'll stray ;
 And, like the bee, steal all the sweets away ;
 Extract its beauty, and its power,
 From every new poetic flower,
 Whose sweets collected may a wreath compose,
 To bind the poet's brow, or please the critic's nose.

P. 1, l. 6. Hayley, who first prints this poem, gives "bowel-racking." Southey, Bell, and Benham give "bowel-raking." The alteration seems quite unnecessary. The *Oxford English Dictionary* gives "bowel-racking" and not "bowel-raking." Bruce gives "bowel-racking."

P. 2, l. 25. Benham gives "froward" for "forward," which is the word printed originally by Croft. Croft is often plainly wrong, but it seems safest to follow him when his text is a possible one : for no later editor has seen the original MSS.

P. 3, l. 1. Croft gives "glassy." All other editors "glossy." But may not Cowper be thinking of "vitreous," as used by Horace, of whom he was then a great reader? There is even something of the same contrast in "Penelopen vitreamque Circen" (Horace, *Odes*, i. 17. 20) as there is here in "Venus' smiles, Diana's mien." It may be noted that he uses the epithet "glassy" of a lake in *Truth*, 259. Still "glassy locks" is scarcely a happy phrase, and "glossy" may possibly be right.

P. 4, l. 2. Croft, followed by Southey and Benham, gives "fluttered"; and there seems no sufficient reason for the substitution with Bell and Bruce of the more obvious "flattered."

P. 4, l. 3. Croft, "and lovers drowned," a mere misprint.

P. 6, ll. 25 and 34. Croft, whom Bruce follows, gives "from what source on earth," and, in l. 34, "shall not wrong." Hayley quoted four stanzas of this poem in his *Life* (i. 20), and the readings in the text are his. They are followed by Southey, Bell, and Benham. Probably both versions are Cowper's own: there are a good many cases in which alternative readings exist which both rest on the authority of the poet.

P. 7, l. 7. Southey, followed by Bruce, Bell, and Benham, has altered the second "there" into "thence." But Croft's original is surely correct: the two "theres" correspond to the two "nows": it is a series of scenes, or pictures.

P. 7, l. 8. Croft gives "in" her votary's eye, but "on" seems right. It is to be remembered that he is not to be blindly trusted. His book is very carelessly printed, his readings being frequently impossible. In the second line of this poem, for instance, he prints "heights": in the first line of the *Ode on the Marriage of a Friend* he prints, "The magic lyre": in the fifth line "waters" for "warblings," and on pages 8, 9 "pathless ray," for "way." And there are many other instances in which he is as certainly wrong. Still, when his text is not impossible it is right to remember that he had the original before him, and we have not.

P. 7, l. 18. Cowper was an admirer of Gray, and it is interesting to notice the obvious influence of Gray, and, behind Gray, of Dryden, in this Ode.

P. 8, l. 2. Croft, "that tear that dims," and so Southey; "the tear that dims," Bell, Bruce, Benham.

P. 8, l. 25. Robert Lloyd, the poet, joint author with Colman of the *Odes to Obscurity and Oblivion*, written in ridicule of Gray and Mason, was one of Cowper's intimates in his Temple days, and a brother member of the Nonsense Club. He was editor of the *St. James Magazine* from 1762 and died in 1764. Hayley (i. 14) says this Epistle was written when Cowper was twenty-three, that is in 1754. It is, therefore, like the piece which here follows it, later in date than some of the "Delia" poems, but it has been thought better, even in defiance of chronological order, to keep the Delia pieces together as an unbroken series.

P. 9, l. 1. It is worth noticing that, even at this early age, Cowper's health already gave what we can now see to be signs of the disease which was afterwards to have such terrible effects. And it is curious that then, as later, he turned to the composition of verse as a cure for melancholy.

P. 9, l. 18. "pitch-kettled." According to Hayley (i. 16) this was "a favourite phrase at the time when this Epistle was written, expressive of being puzzled, or what, in the spectator's time, would have been called *bamboozled*."

P. 10. *To Joseph Hill*:—These humorous verses are here printed for the first time. The original is in the collection of Cowper's letters to Hill, lately the property of Mr. Edward Jekyll, who kindly allowed me access to them, and now of the Rev. Canon Cowper Johnson, of Yaxham

Rectory. The letters which, after being arranged and bound by John Johnson for Mr. Hill, were made by him an heirloom to go with his property at Wargrave, came with that property to an ancestor of Mr. Jekyll who has lately presented them to Canon Johnson, the owner of the Abbot portrait and other objects of interest connected with Cowper. I have printed the verses exactly as Cowper wrote them, following, on this occasion, even his spelling and his curious choice of capital letters. His punctuation, however, is so evidently arbitrary that I have not thought it necessary to adhere to it.

Joseph Hill, with whom Cowper had the most unbroken, and, perhaps, the most affectionate of all his friendships, was his adviser and sometimes, as may be seen in the letters printed for the first time in this edition, more than his adviser, in all his pecuniary affairs from the time that he left the St. Albans Asylum till his death. *Cf. the Epistle to Joseph Hill, Esq., p. 363.*

P. 11, l. 23. *For my Father consenteth
To make me the Flower of the Age.*

I do not know what this can refer to. Cowper took chambers in the Middle Temple in 1752, was called to the Bar in 1754, lost his father in 1756 and moved to the Inner Temple in 1759. What it was, then, to which his father had consented in 1755, it is probably impossible now to say. "G. Berk.," the address from which he writes, is, of course, his father's Rectory of Great Berkhamstead.

P. 12. *Of Himself*:—This most characteristic piece has been placed immediately before the *Delia* poems, as its last words almost make it one of them.

P. 12, l. 36. I have ventured to substitute "e'en" for "e'er" on my own conjecture, which I see had also occurred to Bruce, who suggests it in a note. All other editions follow Croft's "e'er."

P. 13, l. 1. *To Delia*:—For the story of the poet's love of *Delia* (Theodora Cowper), see Introduction to this edition, p. xii.

P. 13, l. 20. Catfield, spelt Cutfield by Croft, is a village in Norfolk of which Roger Donne, Cowper's mother's brother, was Rector. Donne's daughter Catharine was the mother of John Johnson, in whose house the poet died.

P. 13, l. 33. Bruce suggested "yes!" in place of "yet" and is followed by Benham. Southey and Bell rightly follow Croft. "Yet" refers to *Delia*'s refusal, the sense being "yet, though she now refuses my request, if I can persuade her and gain one single hair, she will admit, when age comes upon her, that that one hair, and that alone, has preserved its youth."

P. 14, l. 35. "gains" is Bruce's conjecture for Croft's "jeins." Bruce is followed by Benham.

P. 15, l. 9. Benham substitutes "love" for "loved," but the change, however plausible, seems unnecessary.

P. 18. *On her Endeavouring*, etc. :—The last two stanzas of this piece have a special interest as showing how early Cowper's attitude towards the indulgence of human emotion makes its appearance. It is one of entire naturalness, frankness, and simplicity, equally far removed from the disdainful repression of the feelings which had been the ideal of the Stoics, and from the "luxury of tears" which was so soon to become a fashion all over Europe.

P. 19, l. 13. Where or what New Burns is I do not know. The name seems unknown to the Gazetteers and is probably that of a house.

P. 20, l. 21, and p. 21, l. 15. R.S.S. I do not know what these letters mean.

P. 21, l. 32. All editors follow Croft, who prints "There borne aloft : " but I cannot help thinking Cowper wrote "then" and have ventured to substitute it.

P. 24. Hayley (i. 12) says that these lines were originally part of a letter to one of Cowper's "female relations," no doubt Lady Hesketh, and that the letter having been destroyed, the verses owe their preservation to her memory. They refer to the death of his friend Sir William Russell, who was drowned in 1757, and, of course, to his separation from Theodora Cowper.

P. 24, l. 36. Hayley prints "distant," a sufficient proof that he is no more to be implicitly trusted than Croft. Southey follows him, but the correction "destined" is certainly right. Bruce, who is less complete in his record of various readings for these *Early Poems* than for the *Task* and the later poems, prints "destined" without comment.

P. 25. *On reading the "Prayer for Indifference"* :—Most of the editors have followed Southey in heading these lines "Addressed to Miss Macartney," the author of the "Prayer": but it seems more natural to regard them as a protest against the "Prayer," addressed not to its author but to the "fair maid" of the fifth stanza who, unlike the writer of the "Prayer," knows the joys of sympathy. John Johnson, who first printed it in his edition of the poems, 1815, gives the title "Addressed to Miss — on reading the 'Prayer for Indifference' (1762)"; and speaks of it in his Preface as the "interesting poem addressed by Cowper to an unknown lady on reading the 'Prayer for Indifference.'" I have had before me a correspondence between him and Charles Cowper, another cousin of the poet, as to the person addressed. One would have guessed Theodora Cowper, and so it appears Hayley and Johnson had conjectured ; but Charles Cowper says in one of his letters : "to Mrs. Theodora Cowper it was certainly not addressed, for she had never heard of the Poem, till my sister showed it her from Mr. Madan's copy." Charles Cowper argues that the verses are addressed to the authoress of the "Prayer," and that their point is an appeal from her poem to her heart; and some confirmation for this view may be found in the phrase "amid your *silent hours*" in the fifth stanza. There is no doubt from the correspondence

that Johnson printed it as he found it in his MS., which was, as he tells us in the Preface, a copy transcribed from her father's commonplace book by the daughter of Cowper's "highly-valued and affectionate relative" Martin Madan. The fact, then, that the MS. gives Cowper's verses as "Addressed to Miss ——," when taken in connection with the fact that the poem to which he replies is headed in the *Annual Register* for 1762 "A Prayer for Indifference. By Mrs. G——," would seem conclusive against the theory that Cowper was addressing its authoress. But this Charles Cowper endeavours to meet by arguing that Cowper either saw the poem before it was printed and while its authoress was Miss Macartney, or that his verses, though addressed as verses to Mrs. Greville, were sent as a letter or present to a young lady to whom he was writing, and so came to be inscribed by mistake to her. But both these are pure assumptions, so far as I know.

Perhaps, however, the conclusion of the whole matter is best given in a remark he makes in the course of his argument: "however the thing in question seems scarcely worth half the thoughts wasted upon it."

Johnson, who has been generally followed, placed inverted commas before the stanza which begins "Oh! if my Sovereign author" and after the end of the next stanza, and, again, before the stanza beginning "Still may my melting bosom" and after the end of the next: but it seems best to omit them. If any stanza is part of the prayer, it must surely be that which includes the line "Oh grant kind Heaven to me"; and, on the whole, the probability seems to be that Cowper did not distinguish clearly between the prayer and the rest of the poem.

P. 27, l. 30. Croft, "which fly." Southey corrected to "thick fly," and has been followed by all editors.

P. 29, l. 15. *Lines written under the Influence of Delirium*:—These terrible Sapphics were written in the interval between his attempt at suicide in the Temple, and his removal to St. Albans. (Southey i. 141.) Southey says lines 15 and 19 ("if vanquished" and "fed with judgment") are "evidently corrupt." But there seems no sufficient reason for thinking so. "Vanquished" refers to the struggle with spiritual enemies in which he conceived himself to be involved, and "fed with judgment" is no very obscure metaphor: It may possibly allude to the fact that during these attacks he loathed food, as he says in the fourth stanza of the poem which follows; his life, he seems to say, was death, and his food judgment.

The verses were first printed in 1822, in the Autobiographical Memoir, in which Cowper relates his illness and recovery.

P. 30. This song appears now for the first time in a Collected Edition of Cowper. It has, however, been previously printed, in an article by Mrs. D'Arcy Collyer in the *Universal Review* for June, 1890, and in Mr. Thomas Wright's *Unpublished and Uncollected Poems of William Cowper*. Mr. Wright heads it, correctly in all probability, but, so far as I know, without authority, "written at St. Albans in 1764 after the poet's recovery." I

have printed it from the original MS. in Cowper's hand, kindly lent to me by the owner, my friend Mr. E. P. Ash. It will be observed by those who compare the text here given with Mr. Wright's that the alternative refrain occurs after every stanza, and is not omitted twice as it is in his book. I have also thought right to follow the poet in a small detail, though it is probably due only to carelessness. He writes "the grace that I have found" in the last line of the first stanza, but in the fifth and the eleventh, the only other cases in which he writes the refrain in full, he has substituted "which" for "that."

P. 32. *Die ultimo*, 1774:—Mr. Thomas Wright, who prints these lines in his *Unpublished and Uncollected Poems of William Cowper*, says that the original was written on the same sheet of paper as the English Sapphics "Hatred and Vengeance." If this be so it would tend to connect them with the poet's attack of insanity, during which the English lines were written. But in the 1835 edition of what is called the Autobiography of Cowper, where the Alcaics were first printed, the date "*die ultimo*, 1774," is added, and they are expressly said to be printed from a MS. And the Welborne copy, from which I have printed them, which is in John Johnson's handwriting, gives at the foot the same date: and, at the top, Johnson has written: "The following verses were found in the handwriting of Cowper by Sam Roberts in an old paper book where he used to keep his accounts. They were sent to me by Mr. Courtenay, March 8, 1810." On the whole this must be held conclusive. Sam Roberts (the poet's servant) remained in Weston after Cowper's departure, and Mr. Courtenay was Cowper's friend, who lived at Weston Hall.

The point has some interest: because, if the earlier date were correct, the reference in the second stanza would necessarily be to Theodora Cowper, while the date 1774 allows the possibility of an allusion to the abandoned marriage with Mrs. Unwin. On the whole, I think the poet is going back in memory to his first love, the only love he ever spoke of with passion, and the only one whose loss is naturally connected, as he here connects it, with the loss of his early home and friends. At the end of 1774 he was still under the shadow of the depression which began in January, 1773, and only began to lift in May, 1774. No letters exist between November, 1772, and May, 1776. Probably when the gloomy spirit was on him, during these years, he could remember no hope of happiness since the catastrophe of 1763 and could believe in no love but Theodora's. I am unable to give any authority for "*vescor*" in the sense in which Cowper plainly uses it, *i.e.*, "I live."

P. 33. For the Olney Hymns, see Introduction, p. xxxiii. Cowper's Hymns are in the original edition distinguished from Newton's by having a C affixed to them.

The original title page of the book, perhaps the most extreme instance on record of the eighteenth-century passion for Virgilian quotations in and out of season, is as follows:—

"Olney Hymns, in three Books.

Book I. On Select Texts of Scripture.

" II. On occasional Subjects.

" III. On the Progress and Changes of the Spiritual Life.

*Cantabitis, Arcades, inquit,
Montibus haec vestris ; soli cantare periti
Arcades. O mihi tum quam molliter ossa quiescant,
Vestra meos olim si fistula dicat amores !*

Virgil, Ecl. x. 31.

*And they sang as it were a new song before the throne ; and no man
could learn that song but the redeemed from the earth.*

Rev. xiv. 3.

As sorrowful—yet always rejoicing.

2 Cor. vi. 10.

*London. Printed and Sold by W. Oliver, No. 12 Bartholomew Close. Sold
also by J. Buckland, No. 57 Paternoster Row ; and J. Johnson, No. 72
St. Paul's Churchyard. MDCCLXXIX."*

P. 50. Hymn XXVI. This beautiful hymn was written on the occasion of the first prayer-meeting held at a house in Olney called the Great House. In the letter of November 30, 1793 to John Johnson printed for the first time in the appendix to the Introduction, Cowper says that writing on a "Sabbath" morning makes him go back to the time when "on Sabbath mornings in winter I rose before day, and by the light of a lanthorn trudged with Mrs. Unwin, often through snow and rain, to a prayer meeting at the Great House, as they call it, near the church at Olney. There I always found assembled forty or fifty poor folks, who preferred a glimpse of the light of God's countenance and favour to the comforts of a warm bed," etc.

P. 51, l. 12. "And bring all heaven before our eyes." From Milton's *Il Penseroso*, line 166. Milton influenced Cowper more than any other poet, but it is curious to find a line borrowed from him occurring in this very un-Miltonic Hymn.

P. 54, l. 8. In the MS. of this Hymn in the Ash Collection, this line is written "Should soon be made his own." The original edition of *Olney Hymns* gives "would," and it has seemed safer to follow this for the reasons given in the note on Hymn LIII.

P. 56. Hymn XXXV. Greatheed (*Memoirs of Cowper*, 32) says that Cowper "conceived some presentiment" of the attack of 1773 "as it drew near, and during a solitary walk in the fields composed that Hymn of the Olney collection beginning 'God moves in a mysterious way.'"

See also Rev. J. Bull's article in *The Sunday at Home* for 1886, p. 392, one of a series which give much interesting information about Cowper and Newton.

P. 64. Hymn XLVII. According to Mr. Wright (*Life of Cowper*, 120), this hymn was written when Cowper was leaving the St. Albans

Asylum in 1765, and is a reflection of his decision to spend the rest of his life in retirement in the country.

P. 69. Hymn LIII. Among the Ash MSS. is one of this Hymn. It reads, in line 3, "an angel of the Lord"; in line 13, "Delights far richer"; in line 17, "your troubles bring"; in line 19, "Supply is sure while he is King."

This is evidently not a series of cases in which the text has been misprinted, but an alternative version, and it may be assumed that the one Newton printed is Cowper's final choice.

Benham's "as he said" in line 11 must be a misprint.

P. 74. Hymn LXI. This Hymn also occurs among the Ash MSS. In the last line of the third stanza the MS. reads "Oh where's the Gospel's seal?" For the rest, it agrees with the printed text.

P. 79. *Anti-Thelyphthora*:—For this poem see Introduction, p. xxxv. Madan's book, against which it is directed, was called *Thelyphthora* (corruption of women), his idea being that the polygamy he advocated would prevent prostitution. Among the Welborne MSS. is the copy of a letter to Newton, dated December 21. 80. This copy includes an unpublished passage as follows:—

"If *Anti* (i.e., *Anti-Thelyphthora*) should live through a second impression, I have four lines by me that I think might be added with some advantage, though I have never taken the trouble to mark the place where they might be inserted. That, however, might be easily found. Having given one hero a spear, I would give the other a shield as thus:—

'His shield with Hebrew lore was scribbled round
But, snatching it impatient from the ground
And slinging it reversed upon his arm,
He changed it to a Cabbalistic charm.'"

As Cowper did not himself decide how these lines were to be inserted in the poem, it is clearly best for his editors not to do so.

Anti-Thelyphthora was published anonymously. The original title-page is as follows:—

"Anti-Thelyphthora. A tale in Verse.

Ah miser

Quanta laborabas in Charybdæ.

—Hor. Lib. i. Ode 27.—

London: Printed for J. Johnson, 1781."

Martin Madan (1726-1790), whose mother was Judith Cowper, sister of the poet's father, was "converted" by hearing Wesley preach, took orders, and became a celebrated preacher at the Lock Hospital. Part of the modern forms of the hymns "Lo He comes" and "Hark the herald angels sing" were written by him. His private character was excellent, but the scandal caused by the publication of his book *Thelyphthora*, which advocated polygamy, was so great that he was obliged to resign his chaplaincy. He spent his later years at Epsom in literary and theological work.

P. 83. *On a Review*, etc :—The article referred to is that mentioned in Cowper's own Note to *Anti-Thelyphthora*. It appeared in the *Monthly Review* for October, 1780.

P. 84. *Love Abused* :—This poem may be read in the poet's own hand among the Unwin MSS. in the British Museum (Add. MSS., 24,154, fol. 40).

P. 85. The French motto is taken from the *Jouissance de Soi Même* of Caraccioli, chapter xi., *De la Vérité*. Louis Antoine de Caraccioli was born at Paris in 1721 and died there in 1803. He was the author of a number of moral and religious works. Cowper had a high opinion of them and thought of translating the *Jouissance de Soi Même*; see the letter of November 7, 1781, and those of February, and of March 8, 1784, to Newton (Wright, ii. 161, 167).

P. 87. This Preface only appears in a few copies of the original edition. It was withdrawn at the request of Johnson, the publisher, who thought it would injure the sale of the volume. Cowper had it reinserted in the fifth edition, 1793, by Newton's request. See the letter of October 26, 1790.

P. 90. For *Table Talk*, and the first volume generally, see Introduction, p. xxxv.

P. 90, l. 6. Canon Benham compares Byron, *Childe Harold*, iv. 41 :—

“For the true laurel wreath which glory wreathes
Is of the tree no bolt of thunder cleaves.”

There was an ancient belief that lightning will not strike laurel.

P. 90, l. 13. Among the Ash MSS. are lines 13-28 of *Table Talk*. They are in Cowper's hand, as are all the Ash MSS., and the lines are given as printed except line 15 which runs :—

“Who with a courage sound both heart and root.”

The letter to Newton, March 18, 1781, shows that this passage was not in the original draft of the poem but was substituted for something to which Newton objected.

P. 91, ll. 65-82. George III. obviously supplies some features of the portrait of the ideal king, given here and in lines 140-167, though perhaps not so many as the poet believed.

P. 91, l. 83. *The patriotic tribe* :—A “patriot,” in the political language

P. 92, l. 93. *Quevedo* :—Francisco Gomez de Quevedo, a distinguished Spanish poet, was born at Madrid in 1580, and died in 1645. Southey notes : “I do not know where Cowper found this ; but certainly no such ‘sober tale’ would ever have been allowed to pass by the censors of the press in Spain.”

P. 93, l. 137. “Struck” 1782-1787 : Southey, Bell, Bruce. “Stuck” 1788 and later editions till Southey. Bruce is wrong in saying the 1787 edition gives “stuck.” “Stuck” is plainly a mere corruption, and one of many indications that the later editions are of little authority.

P. 95, l. 234. Cf. Goldsmith’s description of the French in *The Traveller*, lines 240 *et seq.*

“Gay sprightly land of mirth and social ease,
Pleased with thyself, whom all the world can please ;”

and the whole passage, with the character of the English which follows a little later. *The Traveller* was published in 1764, but apparently Cowper had not read it when he wrote his first volume, as he writes to Lady Hesketh, on November 30, 1785 : “I have read Goldsmith’s *Traveller* and his *Deserted Village*, and am highly pleased with them both, as well for the manner in which they are executed as for their tendency and the lessons they inculcate.” This seems to imply that it was his first sight of them.

P. 97, l. 340. With this fine panegyric of Chatham, cf. the famous passage in *The Task* : *Timepiece*, 237.

P. 98, l. 384. The Rev. John Brown (1715-1766), author of an essay on Shaftesbury’s “Characteristics” highly praised by J. S. Mill, and, with many other productions, of the “Estimate” to which Cowper refers. It was entitled *An Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times*, appeared in 1757, and was in its seventh edition the next year. Sir Leslie Stephen describes it (*Dict. Nat. Biog.*), as “a well-written version of the ordinary complaints of luxury and effeminacy which gained popularity from the contemporary fit of national depression.” It was of course forgotten in the glories of the great administration of Chatham.

P. 101, l. 527. The two figures, which formerly stood on the Church of St. Dunstan in the West, and beat the hours on a bell, were removed when the church was rebuilt in 1831.

P. 104, l. 672. Charles Churchill, author of “The Rosciad,” and other Satires, among which Cowper particularly admired “Gotham,” was born in 1731 and died in 1764. For his influence on Cowper see Introduction, p. xl. He was buried at St. Martin’s, Dover, where his grave bears a line from his own *Candidate* which, especially considering who and what he was, is perhaps the strangest inscription ever set up in a Christian churchyard :—

“Life to the last enjoyed, here Churchill lies.”

P. 105, l. 744. The later editions substitute “idle” for “idol” : another proof that they are not to be trusted.

P. 107, ll. 49, 50. "These open," "those call" 1782. The later editions, followed by Bruce, give "those open," "those call." Southey and Bell rightly follow the original edition.

P. 108, l. 99. "Prodigious, ominous," 1782-1787; "prodigies, ominous," 1788; "prodigies ominous" from 1793 onwards till Southey restored "prodigious." Bell, Bruce, and Benham give "prodigies ominous."

P. 108, l. 103. "That man" from 1793, till Southey restored the original reading.

H. W. M. P. 108, l. 125. Occiduum (west) is, almost certainly, a punning name for Charles Wesley, as Leuconomus stands for Whitefield in *Hops*. Local gossip at Olney seems, however, to have identified Occiduum with a neighbouring clergyman. Cowper's letter to Newton (September 9, 1781) refers to the person meant but leaves the identity obscure.

P. 109, l. 150. Later in life Cowper had a better opinion of "fiddling parsons." See his letter to John Johnson, April 17, 1790, to whom he writes: "Thus qualified, and by the aid of your fiddle into the bargain, together with some portion of the grace of God (without which nothing can be done) to enable you to look well to your flock when you shall get one, you will be well set up for a parson."

P. 112, l. 261. "Should tell you" 1782, 1786; "would tell you" 1787.

P. 112, l. 278. "Deep impression" 1782-1788: "impressions" 1793. Southey as usual follows the early editions and so, in this case, does Benham; Bruce and Bell give the later reading.

P. 113, l. 318. "Scribbled" first in 1787 and subsequent editions, strangely followed by Bruce, Bell, and Benham; Southey restored "scribble," the reading of 1782-1786.

P. 113, ll. 335-352. The reference is, of course, to Lord Chesterfield's letters to his son.

This passage was not in the original draft of *The Progress of Error*. It was sent to Newton with the letter of January 21, 1781, a copy of which, among the Welborne MSS., contains an unpublished passage showing this to have been the case. Cowper, as will be seen by a reference to the printed letter, had lately sent *The Progress of Error* to Newton, who managed the publication of his first volume for him. After the passage referring to it which, as printed, ends at the words "more to be depended on," the original letter continued:—

"Since I sent you the copy I have added some lines upon a character, which did not occur to me at the first heat, but which I should have been sorry to have omitted till it had been too late to insert it. I must beg you to bespeak a place for it immediately after the address to the Novelists where it will be very properly disposed of, and will add force to what follows upon the subject of Thelyphthora."

Then followed in the original the Chesterfield passage, 335-352, but



P. 122, l. 119. Spencer Cowper, youngest son of Lord Chancellor Cowper, was born in 1713, became Dean of Durham in 1746, and died in 1774.

P. 123, l. 156. Miss Bridget is described from Hogarth's "Morning."

P. 124, l. 212. Geta, the slave's name in the *Phormio* of Terence: and so used generally for a servant.

P. 126, l. 298. "That never" 1782, 1786; "who never" 1787 and later editions.

P. 127, l. 358. Rev. Dr. Conyers, of Helmsley, one of the three clergymen consulted by Cowper and Mrs. Unwin as to where they should settle in 1767.

P. 128, l. 378. William, second Earl of Dartmouth, patron of the living of Olney, a friend of Newton and a conspicuous figure in the Evangelical movement. He had been at Westminster School with Cowper.

P. 128, l. 378. "That wears" 1782-1786; "who wears" 1787 and later.

P. 130, l. 504. "Who insults," from 1787 onwards.

P. 131, l. 543. "Who slights," from 1787.

P. 137, l. 230. A reminiscence, of course, of the famous passage in the sixth *Aeneid*, lines 847 *et seq.*

P. 141, ll. 376-389. The Test Act, passed in the reign of Charles II. and not repealed till that of George IV., provided that all persons holding any office should take the oath of supremacy, should subscribe a declaration against transubstantiation, and should publicly receive the sacrament according to the rites of the Church of England. The Bishop who toiled to cleanse the stain was Warburton, who wrote an essay on "the necessity of a Test Act."

P. 141, ll. 389-412. These lines were a later insertion of Cowper's to replace some lines attacking Roman Catholics, which, however, were already printed and are to be found in some copies of the 1782 edition. See the letters to Newton, November 27 and December 4, 1781, from which it is satisfactory to be able to conclude that Newton agreed with Cowper in his desire to expunge the uncharitable passage. With Cowper friendship always disarmed criticism, and it has generally been assumed, as, for instance, by Southey and Mr. Wright, that it was his friendship with the Roman Catholic Throckmortons that led him to strike out "the offensive passage," as he himself calls it. But this is a mistake. In the letters mentioning his decision to strike out the lines he says nothing of the Throckmortons; and the fact is that he did not know them till some years later. His first volume of poems was published in 1782, and his first meeting with the Throckmorton family appears to have taken place in 1784. See the letter of May 10, 1784. The letters of August 24, 1786, and September 24, 1786, show that even then the acquaintance was but just beginning.

This passage omitted was as follows:—

*"Hast thou admitted with a blind fond trust,
 The lie that burned thy father's bones to dust,
 That first adjudged them heretics, then sent
 Their souls to Heaven, and cursed them as they went?
 The lie that Scripture strips of its disguise,
 And execrates above all other lies,
 The lie that claps a lock on mercy's plan,
 And gives the key to yon infirm old man,
 Who, once insconced in apostolic chair,
 Is deified, and sits omniscient there;
 The lie that knows no kindred, owns no friend
 But him that makes its progress its chief end,
 That, having spilt much blood, makes that a boast,
 And canonizes him that sheds the most?
 Away with charity that soothes a lie,
 And thrusts the truth with scorn and anger by!
 Shame on the candour and the gracious smile
 Bestowed on them that light the martyr's pile,
 While insolent disdain in frowns expressed
 Attends the tenets that endured that test!
 Grant them the rights of men, and while they cease
 To vex the peace of others, grant them peace;
 But trusting bigots, whose false zeal has made
 Treachery their duty, thou art self-betrayed."*

P. 141, l. 414. "Sins" 1786. But "sin," the 1782 reading, reappears in 1787 and subsequent editions and is plainly right, though Southey gives "sins."

P. 141, l. 422. Jude, in whose epistle, verse 7, these words occur.

P. 142, l. 466. All the earlier editions, 1782-1788, place a comma after "truth," thus making "sublime" an epithet, not of "truth," but of "England borne upon the wings of truth." Their authority is small in matters of punctuation, but I am inclined to think there is here no need for the alteration made in the later editions. Bruce, who usually gives the textual variations, does not mention this; like other editors he prints "truth sublime."

P. 142, l. 467. 1782-1788, "island spot"; 1793, and later, "island, spot."

P. 143, l. 499. "Rolling chords" 1788 and later; and so Bruce, while Southey and Bell give "tolling," the original reading.

P. 143, l. 500. "Awaking" 1788 and later; followed by Benham, Bruce, and Bell.

P. 145, l. 605. "One hour" earlier editions; "an hour" first in 1788. Bruce prints "one hour" without note.

P. 146, l. 623. "Or spare" 1793 and later.

P. 146, l. 624. The common punctuation makes nonsense of this passage by placing commas after "tide" and "freely."

P. 146, l. 638. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, iv. 642:—

“Pleasant the sun
When first on this delightful land he spreads
His orient beams.”

P. 146, l. 662. Southey and Benham strangely change to “trembled.”

P. 151, l. 116. “With every good” 1793 and later, followed by Bruce.

P. 152, l. 163. “Wings” 1794 and later: an evident mistake, though it appears both in Southey and Bell. Bruce rightly gives “wing.”

P. 153, l. 205. Cotton, the physician to whose skill and humanity Cowper owed his recovery from his first attack of insanity.

P. 156, l. 357. The earlier editions place the comma after “sips,” and this seems right, though their authority in matters of punctuation is very small.

P. 157, l. 401. “Dealings” 1793 and later.

P. 160, l. 554. Leuconomus is a Greek version of the name of Whitefield, the great preacher.

P. 163, l. 718. “Lightning” 1787 and later. Either may be right, as “play” is probably governed by “if,” the apodosis not beginning till “the thunder.” I have inserted a semicolon after “away” as the point seems to be that if there is a storm, the storm seems sent to accompany his doom.

P. 164, l. 742. Cf. *Paradise Lost*, v. 153. It is one of many Miltonic reminiscences. Cf. *Charity*, 263, 435, 446; *Retirement*, 87; to give a few specimens to which many might be added.

P. 164, l. 750. “Who share” 1787 and later.

P. 165. *Charity*, 8. “Or felt” 1793 and later.

P. 166, ll. 89-96. The sovereign of the country conquered by Cortez, the Mexican Emperor Montezuma, died of an accidental wound, and not by execution. On the other hand, if Cowper was thinking of Pizarro, whom he does not mention, there is still a difficulty, for Charles V., and not Philip II., was on the throne of Spain, when Pizarro put Atahualpa to death. Nor was Philip ever Emperor. James Cook, the great and humane sailor and discoverer, was born in 1728, and murdered by natives of Owhyhee in 1779.

P. 170, l. 253. John Thornton, 1720-1790, a munificent merchant who gave away £2000 or £3000 a year. He allowed Newton £200 a year for hospitality, and doubled the allowance when Cowper took refuge in Newton's house. See the poem to his memory, page 476.

P. 170, l. 255. “Has seen,” as given by some of the editors, may be an improvement, but it has no authority. The original editions from 1782-1794 all give “hath.”

P. 171, l. 296. John Howard, who gave his life to the reform of prisons, and died of fever in the Crimea in 1790. His statue stands under the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral.

NOTES

P. 174, l. 435. Southey compares *Paradise Lost*, v.

"Like Maia's son he stood
And shook his plumes, that heavenly fragrance
The circuit wide."

P. 174, l. 446. Cf. *Paradise Lost*, iv. 156 :—

"Gentle gales
Fanning their odoriferous wings, dispense
Native perfumes, and whisper whence they stole
Those balmy spoils."

P. 174, l. 454. "Her sister's" 1793, 1794. And
and Bruce (who gives no note). Southey, as usual, f
texts, and gives "a sister's."

P. 175, l. 469. Brief is still used in Norfolk in this
farmer who has lost a cow, or had some other special mi
the rector to state his case on a "brief," that is a sheet
can carry round the parish for subscriptions. The collec
made in church, so far as I know.

P. 178, l. 601. "Accomplishment" 1787 and later, as
prints "accomplishments."

P. 178, l. 636. "Subject sake" 1782, and so South
corrected to "subjects" 1793. Bruce gives "subject" as

P. 179, l. 36. "Christian praise" 1782-1787. "C
and later; and so Benham, Bruce, and Bell. Southey g

P. 181. In the earlier editions up to 1788 "Sop
an abbreviation "Soph." Later "Soph," and so the
Southey.

P. 183, l. 220. The original editions italicise *them*.

P. 184, l. 245. With this denunciation of tobacco, co
ing lines in its praise addressed to the Rev. William
Cowper's heart could always get the better of his head,
condemnations always admit exceptions for those whom he
in general might be lazy and useless, but not his friend
Deans as a rule worldly, but not Dean Cowper; College
topers, but not the poet's brother; and so William Unwi
cused for being a pluralist, and William Bull praised for
pipe. Who would wish away the affectionate poet's mo
sistencies?

P. 184, l. 250. "Trifles" 1782-87; "triflers" 1788 an
Southey, Bruce, Bell, and Benham. This seems one o
where the later editions are right.

P. 186, l. 332. All the editions 1782-1794 read "its"
have substituted "'tis." So Southey, Bell, Bruce, Benha

P. 186, l. 355. "Tried" appears in 1793. And so Be
as given 1782-1788, is certainly right. And so Benham, Bru

P. 187, l. 385. "And if" 1793, 1794.

P. 187, l. 387. The original texts give "an happy." But this is substantially a question between modern spelling and that of the eighteenth century.

P. 188, l. 434. "Adds the birth" 1782, 1786; "aids" from 1787. Southey "adds"; Bruce, Bell, Benham "aids." "Adds" seems right because the idea is that of completion not that of assistance.

P. 189, l. 505. It is curious that, many years before Cowper wrote this beautiful passage, we find him saying, in a letter to Lady Hesketh (August 1, 1765) that he had been intimate with a "man of fine taste" who had confessed that "though he could not subscribe to the truth of Christianity itself, yet he never could read St. Luke's account of our Saviour's appearance to the two disciples going to Emmaus without being wonderfully affected by it, and he thought that if the stamp of divinity was anywhere to be found in Scripture, it was strongly marked and visibly impressed in that passage."

Evidently the story is one that had always made a special impression on Cowper himself with the result that he has here achieved one of the very few successful poetic paraphrases of a passage from the Bible.

P. 190, l. 556. "Is guarded" first appears in 1793.

P. 191, l. 569. "Upward" 1782-1787; "upwards" from 1788.

P. 193, l. 660. "Our own" 1782-1788; "your own" from 1793. Bruce gives "our own" without comment.

P. 198. For *Retirement*, the best of the eight satires, see Introduction, p. xxxvi.

P. 200, l. 69. "Helmed heads" 1782, 1786; "helmet" from 1787; and so Bruce, Benham, Bell.

P. 200, l. 87. Cf. *Paradise Lost*, v. 153, already imitated in *Hope*, 742.

P. 200, l. 106. "Whatever is" 1782, 1786; "what is" 1787, 1788. Then, as this left the line two syllables short, "on earth what is" was printed in 1793. Southey and Bell follow 1782; Bruce and Benham 1793.

P. 204, l. 279. Heberden was Cowper's friend and physician in his London days.

P. 206, ll. 365-480. Sir George Trevelyan quotes some lines from this passage in his delightful *Early History of Charles James Fox* (vii. 289), and speaks of the retired statesman as "perhaps the most powerfully drawn of all Cowper's characters." He suggests that these may be the verses which Cowper told Unwin he had "finished, and polished, and touched and retouched with the utmost care" writing only a dozen lines in a morning instead of his usual task of sixty, and justly adds "O si sic omnia." But Cowper does not seem to refer to any particular passage (see the letter to Unwin, October 6, 1781); he is speaking of his general method of work. And the letter of September 18, 1781, which contains the remark about sometimes doing only a dozen lines a day, does not at all allege a higher standard as the cause of the reduced production, but seems to imply a diminished power of invention.

P. 208, l. 461. "Nor happiness" 1782-1788; "No happiness" 1793.

Southey gives "Nor"; Bruce, Bell, and Benham "No." "No" seems an improvement, but I doubt if the improvement is Cowper's; the line as it stood at first is exactly in his manner.

P. 209, l. 506. "Contemplations" 1782-1787, and so Southey; "contemplation" 1788, and so Bruce and Bell.

P. 213, l. 687. Voltaire, who built a church and placed in it the inscription "Deo erexit Voltaire."

P. 216. *The Doves*:—This piece was enclosed by Cowper in a letter to Mrs. Newton, in June, 1780. The letter is published in Southey, xv. 52, and more fully in Wright, l. 194. Among the Welborne MSS. are several more complete copies, giving further omitted passages. From these it appears that the poem, which he says in the letter was then "about ten days old," was originally called *Anti-Thelyphthora* and began as follows:—

*"Muss, mark the much lamented day
When, like a tempest feared,
Forth issuing on the last of May
Thelyphthora appeared.*

*"That fatal eve I wandered late
And heard the voice of love;" etc.*

"The first Stanza," says the poet, "will make you acquainted with the occasion of it. I have been astonished to learn from good authority that some persons of respectable name have honoured the author's (i.e., Madan's) argument with their approbation." In the course of a note, signed J. J., that is, John Johnson, occurs the following: "*The Doves* was called in the original MS., which I saw at Weston, *Anti-Thelyphthora*, and was new named no doubt for the above reason"; that is, Cowper's wish not to be known as the author of anything against Madan.

The letter concludes: "The male Dove was smoking a pipe, and the female Dove was sewing, while she delivered herself as above. This little circumstance may lead you perhaps to guess what pair I had in my eye." It has been assumed that this must be a reference to "smoke-inhaling Bull" the Dissenting clergyman of Newport Pagnell, and his wife. But Cowper did not know Bull in June, 1780. The letter of November 7, 1781, to Newton seems to refer to their first meeting; and Cowper describes Bull to Unwin in June, 1783, as if he were a comparatively new friend; and an even stronger proof is that in his first letter to Bull, dated March 24, 1782, he says, "as you offer me your friendship," and invites Bull to come over to Olney, "when your leisure and your health will allow you." This seems conclusive against his having known Bull in 1780.

The allusion, therefore, is probably to Mr. and Mrs. Newton. He fancied them having such a conversation as this as Newton smoked and his wife did her sewing. We know that Newton smoked from Cowper's letter to him of September 18, 1781, and from the poem on smoking addressed to Bull.

The poem occurs also among the Ash MSS. with the same opening six lines as are found in the Welborne MSS.

P. 217. *A Fable*:—See letter of May 10, 1780, written the day after this fable.

The piece is in Cowper's hand among the Ash MSS. It is as afterwards printed except that in the fourteenth and following lines the MS. strangely reads:—

*"Lest the rude blast that threatened so,
And rocked her cradle to and fro,
Should split the trunk or snap the bough,
Then fruitless all her hopes to see
A pretty gaping progeny.
But just at eve," etc.*

P. 217, l. 28. "Dray" is an old word for a squirrel's nest. It is so used in White's *Selborne*.

P. 218. "Sweet stream, that winds," etc.:—These lines were sent to Unwin in a letter on June 8, 1780. The reference was to Unwin's sister-in-law, Miss Shuttleworth: though Cowper says the lines are "not so exclusively applicable to a maiden as to be the sole property of your sister Shuttleworth" and that Mrs. Unwin "has not lost her right to this just praise by marrying you."

The letter with the lines is now in the British Museum (Add. MSS., 24,154).

P. 218. *Verses Supposed to be Written*, etc.:—MSS. of this piece exist among the Unwin MSS. in the British Museum (in Mrs. Unwin's hand) and among the Ash MSS. Both are as usual plainly inferior, in their few variations, to the printed version which is no doubt the final one.

In the fifth stanza, line 5, the Unwin MS. reads:—

*"My friends do they never attend
To the sad recollection of me.
O tell me I yet have a friend
Though a friend that I never must see."*

The Ash MS. reads the same except that in the fifth line it gives "ever attend." In the sixth stanza the Ash MS. reads in line 5:—

*"When I think of my native abode
In a moment I seem to be there:
'Tis the body alas with its load
Still holds me a prisoner here."*

In the seventh stanza, line 1, both MSS. read "his nest."

Alexander Selkirk was left alone on the island of Juan Fernandez in 1704 and remained there till January, 1709. His adventures are supposed to have suggested *Robinson Crusoe* to Defoe.

P. 220. *On the Promotion of Edward Thurlow, Esq.*:—Edward Thurlow (1731-1806), who in his early years was with Cowper in the office of a solicitor named Chapman in Ely Place, became Lord Chancellor in 1778. He did not acknowledge Cowper's gift of his first volume, a neglect or

mistake which caused the allusions to him in the *Epistle to Joseph Hill* and *The Valediction*, but later on the misunderstanding was removed and he corresponded with Cowper on the translation of Homer and showed his friendliness in various ways.

This poem was sent to Hill with the letter of November 14, 1779, and is with the original letter at Yaxham.

P. 220. *Ode to Peace* :—This piece is among the Ash MSS., which gives in line 3 :—

“Once more in William’s heart,”

and in line 9 :—

“Whom nothing base beguiles.”

P. 221. *Human Frailty* :—Sent to Unwin with the letter of December 2, 1779, now in the British Museum. In the last verse, the MS. gives “But oars alas can ne’er prevail.”

P. 222. *The Modern Patriot* :—This piece was meant to refer to Burke, but Cowper repented on reading a speech of Burke’s, “with his proposals for a reformation.” He says (February 27, 1780) that he burnt the verses, but he must have kept a copy.

He disliked Burke’s attitude on the American question. The speech that made him change his mind on Burke’s character must be that delivered on February 11, 1780, “on economical reform,” as it was afterwards entitled.

P. 222. *On Observing Some Names, etc.* :—Sent to Unwin with the letter of September 3, 1780, now in the British Museum, where it appears as afterwards printed.

P. 223. *Report of an Adjudged Case* :—Sent to Unwin December 2, 1780, in a letter now in the British Museum, where it is entitled : “Nose Plt. Eyes Dft. Vid. Plowden Folio 6004.” It also occurs among the Hill letters at Yaxham, (December 27 [not 25 as printed] 1780), where it has the same title. Both MSS. give a few unimportant variations from the text as afterwards printed : In line 1 the Unwin letter gives “once a contest arose” and the Hill letter “a sad contest arose” ; in line 2 the Unwin MS. gives “set them egregiously wrong” ; in line 5 the Hill letter gives “so the Tongue was the lawyer” ; and in line 8 “talent at nicely discerning.”

P. 224. *On the Burning, etc.* :—Sent to Unwin June 22, 1780. The letter is in the British Museum, and exhibits two small variations ; in line 2, “Sworn foes of Sense and Law” ; and in line 7, “the well-judged purchase, or the gift.”

William Murray, Earl of Mansfield, became Lord Chief Justice of England in 1756. It was during the Gordon riots that his house was attacked and his library burnt.

P. 225. *The Love of the World Reproved* :—In this poem, as originally printed in Cowper’s first volume, the following lines occur after the eighth, “point at large” :—

*"Had he the sinful part expressed,
 They might with safety eat the rest :
 But for one piece they thought it hard
 From the whole hog to be debarred
 And set their wit at work to find
 What joint the prophet had in mind."*

These lines are the "unnecessary additions by an unknown hand" referred to in Cowper's note. The hand is said to have been Newton's. But if these are the lines Newton added it is strange that his note should speak of them as "by an unknown hand." For we know from the letter of December 31, 1781, that he had heard of some additions by Newton, though he had not seen them. And his tone in speaking of them is very different to the tone of the note. It seems doubtful, therefore, whether these are Newton's lines. But, whoever may be their author, they are clearly not an improvement, and we may perhaps have the right to be more jealous for the poet than he was for himself, and relegate the impertinent addition to a note.

The piece occurs among the Ash MSS. in Cowper's hand and without the six added lines. It is headed "*Almost a Christian. A Tale.*"

P. 226. *The Lily and the Rose*:—Sent to Unwin in an undated letter in the British Museum (Add. MSS., 24,155, fol. 151). There are no various readings in it. In the letter (Wright, i. 420) Cowper says the verses ought to be supposed to be written twenty years before, no man having "less to do with the ladies' cheeks" than he.

P. 227. *The Nightingale and The Glowworm*:—See letter to Unwin, February 27, 1780, where he says he had read in a philosophical tract that the glowworm is the nightingale's proper food.

P. 228. *On a Goldfinch*, etc.:—Sent Unwin November 9, 1780. The letter and verses, which exhibit no variations of text, are in the British Museum. Cowper mentions that "the tragical occasion of the verum" happened at the house next to his own.

P. 229. *The Pine Apple and the Bee*:—The Hill MSS. give a copy of this piece in the poet's hand. He sent it to Hill with the letter of October 2, 1779. I have borrowed from it one correction, the italics which the poet carefully gives to the word "one" on page 230, lines 5 and 6. Other various readings it affords are "pushed his attempt" in line 7, "all in vain" in line 9, and "pervious only" in line 10. There is also a copy of this poem in the poet's hand among the Ash MSS. It exhibits the same variations as the Hill MS., except that it gives "only pervious" in line 10. Cf. note on a similar poem given on p. 413.

P. 230. *Horace, Book ii. Ode x.* This, and the translations from Bourne which follow, are placed here in order that Cowper's volume may appear in full as it was first printed. For other translations from Bourne and from Bourne's own pen see p. 413.

was a master at Westminster School while Cowper was there. He was an indifferent teacher and so poor a disciplinarian that Cowper says in one of his letters that he remembered seeing the Duke of Richmond "set fire to his greasy locks and box his ears to put it out." Bourne's Latin poems went through several editions and were greatly admired by Cowper who translated many of them and wrote of him (May 10, 1781): "I think him a better Latin poet than Tibullus, Propertius, Ausonius, or any of the writers in his way except Ovid, and not at all inferior to him," a judgment which it amazed Landor to find in a poet whom he considered entitled to rank "paene inter summos." Bourne's poems were edited by Mitford in 1840.

For other translations from Bourne, see pp. 600-612.

P. 236. *The Winter Nosegay*:—Mary is, of course, Mrs. Unwin, and this is the first of the poems addressed to her. See pp. 494, 503.

P. 236. *Mutual Forbearance*:—The MS. in the British Museum (Add. MSS., 24,155, fol. 145) exhibits the following variations:—

- (lines 2-4): "How I detest this odious house!
It is not large enough and, was it,
Yet this low room, and that dark closet."
(line 8): "They almost kill me with the spleen."
(lines 19-22): "Dismiss the coachman," he replies,
"You are by far more nice than wise,
For one slight trespass all this stir?
A wiser man than he might err."

and in line 58 (third line on p. 238):—

"The evils it would gladly cure."

P. 239. *Translation of Prior's Chloe and Euphelia*:—Sent to Unwin May, 1779. The letter with the verses is now in the British Museum. Cowper says in it that he has not got Prior's poem, and has not seen it for twenty years.

P. 239. *Boadicea*:—The heroine of the last British rising against the Romans, about A.D. 60. She seems really not to have died in battle, but to have taken poison on her defeat.

P. 240. *Heroism*:—For allusions to this poem, at one time intended to close the first volume, see the letters of December 17, 1781, December 31, 1781, January 13, 1782. It was originally called *Aetna*. Cowper was a little nervous lest he should be supposed ignorant of the fact that the volcano formed the mountain, and that therefore the mountain did not "tower a cloudcapt pyramid of snow" while her fires "slept silent" within her. But he claims that a poet's imagination is not to be bound down to "mere matters of fact."

P. 244. *To the Rev. William Cawthorne Unwin*:—The lines are with an undated letter (Wright, i. 420) in the British Museum.

Unwin, the only son of Mrs. Unwin, was Rector of Stock, in Essex. To him *Tirocinium* was addressed. He died in December, 1786, and there

is a tablet to his memory in Winchester Cathedral for which Cowper wrote an inscription, which was, however, not accepted.

P. 249, ll. 1-5. *Cf. Paradise Lost*, iv. 13-15.

" P. 250, l. 58. All the editions printed in the poet's lifetime read "the umber stood." But umber means a dark yellow earth and can have no sense here. There can be no doubt that "lumber" is right. It may be noted that, in the first edition 1785, there is a larger space than usual between "the" and "umber," as if a letter were omitted. This disappears later. The whole serves as a striking proof of how little Cowper corrected the new editions of his poems, and how little his authority can be attributed to such corrections as were made after the first editions.

P. 251, l. 96. *Cf. Paradise Lost*, iv. 650. Cowper had always been fond of parodying Milton, as may be seen by the very earliest verses we have of his. See p. 1.

P. 251, l. 103. Sainte-Beuve (*Causeries du Lundi*, xi. 175) translates this passage down to line 180, and says of it: "dans cette description si parfaite qu'on vient de lire, Cowper a su concilier les deux ordres de qualités, la finesse et le relief de chaque détail (je dirai même le brillant sur un ou deux points), et la gradation et la fuite aérienne de la perspective."

P. 252, l. 131. *Cf. Horace, Epistles*, ii. 2, 55: "Singula de nobis anni praedantur euntes."

P. 253, l. 166. I have, with a little hesitation, restored the original reading "rooted in his bank," found in the editions of 1785 and 1786; "their bank" already appears in 1787. Southey gives "his bank;" but Bell, Benham, and Bruce read "their"; the latter, who usually mentions variations in the text, on this occasion not even giving the original reading in the note. "His" seems right, for two reasons: first, that as we have just seen, Cowper does not appear to have corrected the reprints, as, if he had, he could not have passed over so obvious a mistake as "umber" in line 58: and we have found throughout that most of the changes in the later editions appear to be mere corruptions. A further reason is that the bank is the bank of the river not of the trees.

P. 254, l. 211. "Weather-house": an old-fashioned substitute for a barometer, contrived so that a man's figure came forward when bad weather was to be expected, and a woman's when fine. The curious illustration of it is by Blake from Hayley's *Life of Cowper*, ii. 415.

P. 255, l. 262. The chestnuts had been spared by the successors of "Benevolus" and were still to be enjoyed when I was at Weston in 1902. The property has, I believe, now passed out of the hands of the Throckmorton family.

John Courtenay Throckmorton, the "Mr. Frog" of Cowper's letters, succeeded his grandfather in the family baronetcy in 1791. He died in 1819 and was succeeded by his brother George, who had taken the name of Courtenay, and had lived at Weston from the time Sir John succeeded.

Both brothers, and their wives, are constantly and affectionately

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mentioned in Cowper's letters. The portrait reproduced of Downman, in the possession of Mr. Vaughan John drawing done in 1783 and a companion picture to the portrait of Cowper also reproduced in the present edition.

The hall was pulled down in 1827, but the park and the details mentioned by Cowper. In the "Wilderness" of Homer, and the urns with his lines on Fop and Nepean's curious monument, perhaps, is one which was put up by the Duke of Devonshire, but recalls the extreme Whig opinions of the time which Cowper could not share. It is a recumbent lion with the inscription "Mortuo Leoni etiam Lepores insultant, 1815," and which is said to refer to Napoleon.

See Wright, iv. 386, for a letter to Lady Hesketh from which it appears that she regarded Mr. Courtenay, that is, George Thomas Courtenay, as a Jacobin.

It may be noted that almost every detail of what Cowper describes in this passage (lines 220-360) may still be traced on the map of the town. Only the "Peasant's Nest" has become a modern red brick house. "the folded gates" of line 330 no longer guard the avenue. See Mr. Wright's excellent little book *The Town of Cowper*.

P. 260, l. 527. 1785, 1786 "prickly goss" and "Southey: but "gorse" and "deformed," as given from the original seem legitimate corrections. The change is, in fact, significant of modern forms of the words.

P. 263, l. 633. All the editions published in Cowper's name name Omai. Omai was a native of Otaheite, was brought to England in 1774, and was received by George III.

P. 264, l. 702. John Bacon, the sculptor, 1740-1799. His best works are the monuments of Chatham in the Guildhall and of Johnson in St. Paul's. His grave inscription, written by himself: "What I was as an artist seems of little importance while I lived; but what I really was as a believer in religion is the only thing of importance now." He sent Cowper an engraving of his monument of Chatham. See the letter of September 13, and October 22, 1783, in which Cowper sends his thanks.

P. 265, l. 758. "Can ye shine" from 1793.

P. 266, l. 772. "What enemies" from 1787. Southey's reading of 1785 and there seems no sufficient reason for the change. Bruce prints "what" without comment; so Bell and Bentley.

P. 272, l. 285. Much of Cowper's work has an appearance of carelessly written. But all the evidence, his own repeated statements, the various versions which have survived of so many of his poems, show that he never spared himself the "poetic pains" of which he was so fond. The defect was not one of industry but of critical ear.

P. 275, l. 433. "All besides" from 1793.

P. 276, l. 437. "At conventicle heard" 1785, 1786; "heard at conventicle" from 1787. I have here deserted the earlier text; believing that Cowper would probably have accepted the correction, even if he did not, as is just possible, make it himself. But the earlier text may well be defended on the ground of the strong accent on the first syllable of words beginning with "con," which is still to be heard in many parts of the country.

It may be noted that Cowper, though often claimed as their own poet by Nonconformists, was not only always a Churchman, but evidently had no taste for some of the features which were conspicuous at religious meetings of Dissenters.

P. 279, l. 584. "like us" 1785, 1786; "like ours" from 1787.

P. 279, l. 600. "That waits" 1785, 1786, and Southey; "who waits" from 1787; and so Bell, Benham, Bruce.

P. 280, l. 634. "But acquire" from 1787, and so Bell, Benham, Bruce; "and acquire" 1785, 1786, and Southey.

P. 280, l. 660. "In heathen heaven" 1785, 1786, and Southey; "in Juno's heaven" from 1787, and so Bell, Bruce, Benham. I have accepted it as clearly an improvement, and so great a change that it is far less likely than most of the others noted to have been made without the poet's authority.

P. 281, l. 674. "Its sire" 1785, 1786, and Southey; "the sire" from 1787, and so Bell, Bruce and Benham.

P. 285. *The Garden*, 1-20: Another reminiscence of Milton, recalling more than one phrase to be found in *Paradise Lost*. See Book ix. 445 and the opening of Book iii.

P. 286, l. 95. "A good natured age" 1785-1788; "a" omitted first in 1793.

P. 287, l. 131. "Remainder half" 1785, 1786; "remaining half" from 1787.

P. 289, l. 203. "Your glass" 1785-1788, and Southey and Bell; "thy glass" from 1793, and so Bruce and Benham; a correction Cowper could not have rejected.

P. 289, l. 213. "In earth" from 1788, so Bell, Bruce, Benham; "in th' earth" 1785, 1786, and Southey; "in the earth" followed here on the principle of avoiding all avoidable apostrophes.

P. 290, l. 247. It seems best to retain the italics in which all the original editions print "*him*."

P. 290, l. 278. "Who writes" from 1787, and so Bruce and Benham; "that writes" 1785, 1786, and Southey.

P. 291, l. 315. "Summer-month retreats" 1785, 1786, and Southey; "Summermonths' retreat" 1787 and later, at first without and afterwards with the apostrophe; "summer months' retreats," Bruce, Bell, Benham.

P. 294, l. 455. John Philips, poet, author of *Cyder* and *The Splendid Shilling*, was born in 1676 and died in 1709.

P. 294, l. 463. "Stercorarious" 1785, 1786, and Southey; "Stercoraceous" from 1787, Bruce, Benham, Bell.

P. 294, l. 467. "Deciduous and when" 1785, 1786, and Southey; "deciduous when" from 1787, and so Bruce and Benham.

P. 295, l. 510. All the editions 1785-1795 read "fomentation," a manifest mistake.

P. 297, l. 585. All editions (1785-1795) "Caffraia."

P. 300, l. 748. Here, as elsewhere, *e.g.*, 819, "that had" 1785, 1786; "who" later.

P. 301, l. 766. Lancelot Brown, known as "Capability Brown," was originally kitchen gardener to Lord Cobham, but made a fortune by his skill in laying-out gardens, in which his object was to bring out "the undulating lines of the natural landscape" (*Dictionary of National Biography*). He was high sheriff of Huntingdonshire in 1770 and died in 1783.

P. 302, l. 840. "Pleases and yet shocks" 1785-1788, and Southey. "Pleaset and yet shock'st" 1793, an improvement Cowper could not reject.

P. 303. In the argument 1785, 1786 have "amusements of a rural," later editions "rural amusements," which is plainly wrong and one of the many indications that these alterations made in 1787 were unauthorised.

P. 303. Opening of Book IV. This passage is here printed as in the first edition, 1785; gradual changes of punctuation, a point in which the early editions are never to be trusted, ended in the following in 1795:—

"Hark! 'tis the twanging horn o'er yonder bridge,
That with its wearisome but needless length
Bestrides the wintry flood, in which the moon
Sees her unwrinkled face reflected bright,—
He comes," etc.

But the first edition is certainly right, as usual. It is the postman, not the horn, who comes *o'er* the bridge; with the later punctuation the word should be "on" not "o'er."

P. 305, l. 120. This and the lines on Evening, 243 *et seq.*, are the passages illustrated by Blake in the designs with which we have the good fortune to adorn this edition.

P. 308, l. 221. Most editors have substituted "mace" for "mast" as given throughout from 1785-1795.

P. 308, l. 228. "Fit pupils" is given by Bell, and some other editors; but "sit pupils" is the unbroken reading 1785-1795.

P. 309, l. 307. Bell and Benham give "toils," but "toys" is the reading of 1785, and it is still found in 1795. And so Southey and Bruce.

P. 309, l. 308. For a comparison of this passage with Thomson, see Introduction, pp. xlvii. *et seq.*

P. 312, l. 427. Cowper's friend Mr. Thornton. See *Charity*, line 253.

P. 318, l. 718. "There too" 1793, 1795; an obvious error.

P. 319, l. 757. "Grace the wall" 1786; "well," the reading of 1785, was restored in 1787, and remained in the subsequent editions. It is also the reading of Southey, Bell, Bruce, and Benham.

P. 323, l. 135. Cf. Virgil, *Georg.* iv. 363.

P. 324, l. 188. "Should" 1785, 1786; "would" from 1787. Southey as usual follows the earlier editions; Bruce, Benham, and Bell the later.

P. 327, l. 297. Benham prints "philosophic deeds"; but, as Bruce's note shows, this is a mere corruption, which first appears in 1799.

P. 327, l. 331. From the letter of October 20, 1784, it appears that in the original draft of the poem there was here a passage justifying the execution of Charles I. which Cowper calls "a good deed but ill done." Unwin objected to it and it was suppressed and the lines written as they now stand, except that the first words ran "we too are friends to royalty." For the pleasure this passage gave to Queen Charlotte see the note to p. 465.

P. 329, ll. 383-392. Fox quoted these lines, or some of them, in a speech in the House of Commons. Hayley had the pleasure of bringing the newspaper containing the speech and quotation with him on one of his visits to Weston. See Grimshawe's *Life and Works of Cowper*, vol. v. 380.

P. 329, l. 393. "Who values" from 1787.

P. 332, l. 553. "This visible" 1785-1786; "the visible" from 1793.

P. 333, l. 597. "An acquiescence" 1785, 1786, and Southey; "and acquiescence" from 1787, and so Bruce and Benham.

P. 335, l. 704. Sir George Trevelyan, speaking of this passage in a note to his *Early History of Charles James Fox* (ix. 418), expresses the opinion that "in the sweet expression of sympathy with heroic deeds and sufferings," it "yields to very little blank verse in or out of Shakespeare."

P. 344, l. 151. "The scented and the scentless" 1785-1788, and so Southey; "the scentless and the scented" from 1793, and so Bell, Benham, and Bruce, without comment.

P. 345, l. 239. "Who bore" 1786, and so Southey; but "who wore" 1785 and again from 1787.

P. 347, l. 318. "Cries aloud" 1795; "scolds aloud" 1785-1793.

P. 355, l. 679. Cowper refers, of course, to the Jubilee Celebration at Stratford-on-Avon in 1769, of which Garrick was the principal organiser.

P. 359, l. 881. This passage probably refers to the action of Theophilus Lindsey, Vicar of Catterick in Yorkshire, who, after failing in an effort to get the clergy released from the burden of subscribing to the Thirty-nine Articles, resigned his living in 1773, and retired to poverty in London. Sir George Trevelyan tells the story in his *Early History of Charles James Fox* (ix. 418), and, in doing so, says that, while others who had joined in Lindsey's attempt ultimately became bishops, "the only distinction which fell to his lot consisted in a few lines of grudging, and even sinister, commendation by a poet, who so nobly celebrated the martyrs of faith that he might have had something better than irony to bestow upon the martyr of honesty." He proceeds to quote this passage.

P. 361, l. 952. "And idler" 1785-1788; "an idler" 1793, 1795.

P. 363. *An Epistle to Joseph Hill, Esq.*:—Cf. the lines *To Joseph Hill*,

p. 10 and note. Cowper mentions this Epistle in his letter of July 9, 1785, informing Newton that the friends alluded to in line 56 were Thurlow and Colman (see Introduction, p. lv.). In the letter of November 20, 1784, he tells Unwin that the verses were written "on Wednesday last"; and that they form "a tribute so due that I must have disgraced myself had I not paid it. He ever serves me in all that he can, though he has not seen me these twenty years."

P. 365. The mottoes for *Tirocinium* were supplied to Cowper by his friend Bull. See Mr. Josiah Bull's *Memorials of William Bull*, p. 133.

For *Tirocinium*, see Introduction, p. liii.

P. 367, l. 11. "Hers is" 1785-1793; "here is" 1795.

P. 376, l. 435. Robert Lowth, 1710-1787, was Bishop of London from 1777, and declined the Primacy in 1783. His Lectures on Hebrew Poetry and translation of the prophet Isaiah are still remembered for their learning and poetic feeling. Lewis Bagot, fifth son of Sir Walter Bagot, Bart., and brother of the first Lord Bagot, was successively Bishop of Bristol, Norwich, and St. Asaph. He died in 1802. His mother was a daughter of the first Earl of Dartmouth, and he was therefore a cousin of the pious Earl, the friend of Newton and Cowper. For the other Bagot brothers, see the note to p. 477.

P. 380, l. 637. "Proofs" 1785-1787; "proof" from 1788.

P. 387. *John Gilpin*:—(See Introduction, p. liii.), was first printed anonymously in the *Public Advertiser*, November 14, 1782, to which it was sent by Unwin. See the letter of February 13, 1783, to Hill (of which only part has been printed) where he says: "I have written nothing, at least finished nothing, since I published—except a certain facetious History of John Gilpin which Mr. Unwin would send to the *Public Advertiser*." The text in the *Public Advertiser* is the same as that in the second volume of the *Poems*, 1785, in which it was included after some hesitation on the part of the publisher Johnson. The poet suggested its appearance, rightly feeling that to make known his authorship of the celebrated ballad would gain him many readers in circles into which he was not otherwise likely to penetrate. Mr. Wright (ii. 13) states that the story of Gilpin was founded on the adventure of John Beyer, a Cheapside linendraper, and (ii. 16) that Cowper got the name John Gilpin from a tombstone in St. Margaret's, Westminster. The version originally sent to Unwin and headed "for P. A.," that is, for the *Public Advertiser*, is with an undated letter in the British Museum, where it is placed after the letter of November 4, 1782. It differs in the following details, none of them of much interest, from the version afterwards printed which is that given in the text. The title is, "The Entertaining and Facetious History of John Gilpin, showing how he went further than he intended and came safe home at last. To the Tune of Chevy Chase." In the last line on page 387 the MS. reads "which is so bright and clear."

P. 388, l. 23. "When turning round his face" MS.

- P. 389, l. 3. "And hung one bottle on each side" MS.
 P. 389, l. 17. "So 'Fair and softly,' John did cry" MS.
 P. 389, l. 21. "as he must needs" MS.
 P. 389, l. 25. "The horse, who never had before
 Been handled in this kind,
 Affrighted fled, and, as he flew,
 Left all the world behind."

- P. 389, l. 40. "As has been said" MS.
 P. 390, l. 20. "As he had boasted been" MS.
 P. 390, l. 23. "For still the bottle necks were left
 Both dangling at his waist." MS.

P. 390, l. 34. Note the old pronunciation of "balcony" with the accent on the second syllable.

- P. 391, l. 1. "But, ah, his horse" MS.
 P. 391, l. 14. "His neighbour in such a trim" MS.
 P. 391, l. 17. "The tidings tell" MS.
 P. 391, l. 18. "Make haste and tell me all" MS.
 P. 391, l. 24. "In merry strain" MS.
 P. 391, l. 34. "A wig that drooped behind" MS.
 P. 392, l. 2. "That hangs about your face" MS.
 P. 392, l. 6. "And folks would gape and stare" MS.
 P. 392, l. 9. "Then speaking to his horse he said" MS.
 P. 392, l. 25. "Now Gilpin's wife, when she had seen" MS.
 P. 392, l. 33. "The youth did ride and soon they met;
 He tried to stop John's horse
 By seizing fast the flowing rein,
 But only made things worse." MS.

- P. 392, l. 39. "He thereby frightened Gilpin's horse" MS.
 P. 393, l. 4. "The lumber of the wheels" MS.
 P. 393, l. 11. "And they and all that passed that way" MS.
 P. 393, l. 12. "Soon joined in the pursuit" MS.
 P. 393, l. 13. "But all the turnpike gates again" MS.
 P. 393, l. 15. "The man still thinking as before" MS.

P. 393. The remaining poems of the second volume appear in the order of the edition of 1795, when, for the first time, those given here on pp. 393-406 were added, with the exception of that on p. 399, "Catharina, The Second Part," which, though not published till after the poet's death, I have placed here because it is best understood as a sequel to its predecessor. *John Gilpin* retains its original position at the end of the volume both in 1795 and in 1798.

P. 393. *On the death of Mrs. Throckmorton's Bullfinch*:—See the letter of November 11, 1788 (tacked on by Hayley (i. 320) to that of September 25), where Cowper relates the story and says "it will probably employ my versifying passion. Did ever fair lady from the Lesbia of Catullus to the present day lose her bird and find no poet to commemorate the loss?"

and the fifth stanza is given in this form :—

“ For, settling on his grated roof,
He chirped and kissed him, giving proof
That he desired no more ;
Nor would forsake his cage at last
Till gently seized I shut him fast
A prisoner as before.”

I have here, with some hesitation, departed from my general rule of giving the only text which must have had the poet's sanction. The later version is almost unquestionably from the hand of the poet ; and, as the new stanza is certainly an improvement on the old, it seemed pedantry to refuse to adopt it. It may be added that the title *The Faithful Bird*, given by some editors, is not found in any of the editions 1795-1808 and, so far as I have noticed, appears first in Southey.

P. 407. *On The Receipt*, etc. :—See Introduction, page liii. This poem, and the next, for which see the letters of June 27 and July 5, 1788, and of February 26, February 27, 1790, were first printed, in 1798, without Cowper's knowledge or consent (see *Letters of Lady Hesketh*, p. 86), in a little volume containing nothing else. For Anne Bodham, the donor of the picture, see note to page 494.

The 1798 text, again, differs in certain respects from that adopted by the later editions from 1808 ; and I have again adopted the later version which is, in every case but one, an obvious improvement, and can only be by Cowper himself. We know from his letters that several copies of the poem were made for friends (see, for instance letters of March 8 and April 30, 1790) and he may easily have made slight alterations in some of these.

The text of 1798 reads :—

In P. 407, l. 35. “ The parting sound.”
,, 407, l. 37. “ A quick return.”
,, 407, l. 40. “ By disappointment every day.”
,, 408, l. 39. “ Few pleasant hours.”
,, 409, l. 11. “ Anchored at thy side.”
,, 409, l. 14. “ Me howling winds.”
,, 409, l. 18. “ But, oh, the thought.”
And, in “ The Dog and the Water Lily,”
,, 410, l. 25. “ My ramble finished.”

P. 412. *On the Trial of Admiral Keppel* :—This, and the three following poems, are given here from the MSS. in the possession of Mr. E. P. Ash. The verses are in the poet's hand ; after those on Keppel and Palliser a note is added in John Johnson's hand “ about the end of the year 1778.” The poems have not been printed before, except in Mrs. D'Arcy Collyer's article in the *Universal Review*, June, 1890, and in Mr. Thomas Wright's *Unpublished and Uncollected Poems of William Cowper*, 1900.

Admiral Keppel, 1725-1786, was tried by court-martial in 1779 on a charge of misconduct, at the instigation of Sir Hugh Palliser who had been

his third in command in the operations against the French fleet the year before. He was acquitted and became the hero of the hour while Palliser's house was gutted by the mob. Palliser, then, demanded to be tried by court-martial himself, and was also, somewhat hesitatingly, acquitted. Keppel publicly stated that "the Vice-Admiral had behaved gallantly as he passed the French line," and it must be to this that Cowper alludes in the next poem.

An Address to the Mob, etc., see previous note.

P. 413. Printed from the Ash MS., and probably written before the version printed on p. 229, which exists among these MSS. with the title "Another on the same."

P. 414. "Methinks I see" etc. :—This curious fragment is another of the Ash MSS. It is written on the front of a Lace Manufacturer's bill (not a "Lace Buyer" as Mr. Wright says), the back of which has the *Flatting Mill*, also in the poet's hand. The bill is a clean sheet: no items are entered. It is headed in the usual printed form :—

Mr.

Bought of James Nickolls,
Lace Manufacturer,

At Oulney, near Newport Pagnell, Bucks.

The rest of the page has nothing on it but these verses, and, after them, the words "after rain"; and below, "I fancy it will write very well." The whole is in the poet's hand.

Mr. Wright has printed it (without the last half-line), in his *Unpublished Poems*; but it appears here for the first time in a collected edition of the poet. It may be, as Mr. Wright suggests, a passage struck out of the *Progress of Error*.

P. 414. *In Seditioem Horrendam*, etc. :—Among the Unwin MSS. at the British Museum with the letter of June 18, 1780. The MS. agrees with the printed text.

The allusion is, of course, to the Gordon riots of 1780, and to a report, which Cowper believed, that they had been instigated by agents of France.

P. 415. *To the Rev. Mr. Newton* :—A copy of this poem, taken by Hayley from the original, is among his letters to Lady Hesketh in the British Museum (Add. MSS., 30,803 B., fol. 60). He speaks in the same letter of a poem on the Queens of England and France which he would not print because he thought it unworthy of Cowper. I am not aware that this piece has ever been discovered.

P. 415. *Riddle* :—Among the Unwin MSS. at the British Museum with the letter of July 27, 1780. The MS. gives two additional lines.

P. 416. *A Card* :—These lines are in the British Museum with the letter to Unwin of February 27, 1781. They are written exactly as here printed.

P. 418. *To Sir Joshua Reynolds* :—Among the Unwin MSS. at the Museum with an undated letter which is there placed after that of November 26, 1781. The MS. agrees with the printed text.

P. 421. *The Flatting Mill*:—The Ash MSS. include a version of this piece in the poet's hand. It is a rough copy full of corrections. In some he has already arrived at the common text, that of the 1815 edition of Johnson; but in line 10 the MS. gives "the thumps and the blows of the gold-beater's mallet"; in line 12, "from a delicate palate"; in line 14, "to press reformation," and the last two verses appear as follows:—

"His thoughts like the gold should be sterling and true,
As ductile and even his fancy should flow,
Should jingle and tinkle and shine to the view,
And catch in its progress a sensible glow.

"After all he must beat it and thump it as fine
As the leaf that infolds what an invalid swallows,
For truth is unwelcome however divine,
And, unless you disguise it, a nausea follows."

Yet another version of the fifth stanza and first line of the sixth follows below in the MS. :—

"Before he can teach he must learn to delight,
Smooth, ductile and even his fancy must flow,
Must jingle and tinkle and shine to the sight,
And catch in its progress a sensible glow.

"After all he must hammer and work it as fine"

P. 422. *Friendship*:—There are several versions of this poem. The first printed is that to be found in the little volume issued by Bull in 1801, which gives one or two original poems, and this among them, as well as the translations from Madam Guyon. Another is printed by Hayley, in his *Life* (1803), vol. i. 210; while he gives in footnotes the variations of another version he had before him. Among the Unwin MSS. in the British Museum (Add. MSS., 24,155, fol. 143) is yet another, and in the poet's hand. It is one of many cases which show how carefully he re-touched his verses. It is not easy to say which was the final version he preferred. Southey gave that printed by Hayley in his text. Bruce prints Bull's version and incorrectly states that it is the same as that given by Hayley in his footnotes. On the whole I have thought it best to print the text of the MS. which gives thirty-five stanzas against the thirty-six of Bull and the thirty-one of Hayley and Southey, and seems to me in the majority of cases to be the best and therefore probably the latest version.

I add the various readings, for those who wish to form their own judgment as to which is the best text. H. A. means Hayley's text; H. B. the version given in his footnotes: Bull is the 1801 text.

P. 422, l. 5. Hayley A. "What virtue can we name or grace."

P. 422, l. 11. "Purest flame" Bull.

P. 422. Second stanza H. A. reads:—

*"But as the gem of richest cost
Is ever counterfeited most :
So always imitation
Employs the utmost skill she can
To counterfeit the faithful man
The friend of long duration."*

P. 422. Stanza 3. H. A. reads :—

*"Some will pronounce me too severe,
But long experience speaks me clear,
Therefore, that censure scorning,
I will proceed to mark the shelves
On which so many dash themselves
And give the simple warning."*

P. 422. Stanza 4, first two lines H. A. reads :—

*"Youth, unadmonished by a guide,
Will trust to any fair outside."*

P. 422. Stanza 5 :—

l. 2. H. A. *"Lest thus deluded by our eyes"*

l. 4. H. A. *"We should, when undeceived, conclude
Friendship imaginary good."*

P. 422. Stanza 6 :—

l. 3, H. A. reads :—

"Nor should it seem distressful"

l. 6, H. A. *"We sought it unsuccessful"*

P. 423, l. 5. H. A. :—

"Twixt sensualist and sensualist"

P. 423, l. 7. H. A. :—

*"Who hopes a friend should have a heart
Himself well furnished for the part
And ready on occasion
To show the virtue that he seeks ;
For 'tis an union that bespeaks
A just reciprocation."*

P. 423, ll. 13-24. H. A. omits these two stanzas.

P. 423, l. 13. *"Mutual attention is implied"* Bull.

P. 423, l. 18. *"our own"* Bull.

P. 423, l. 19. H. A. omits this stanza.

P. 423, l. 27. *"By ceaseless"* Bull, H. A., H. B.

P. 423, l. 32. H. A. *"with hope of."*

P. 423, ll. 34, 35. H. A. transposes these lines.

P. 424, l. 17. H. A. :—

"And tell you 't was a special jest."

P. 424, l. 19. H. A. :—

*"Beware of tattlers ! keep your ear
Close stopt against the tales they bear,
Fruits of their own invention !
The separation of chief friends
Is what their kindness most intends
Their sport is your dissension."*

P. 424, l. 21. H. B. :—

"The trumpet of invention"

P. 424, l. 24. H. B. :—

"And rush into contention"

P. 424, l. 25. H. A. :—

*"Friendship that wantonly admits
A joco-serious play of wits
In brilliant altercation,
Is union such as indicates
Like hand-in-hand insurance plates
Danger of conflagration."*

P. 424, l. 33. H. A. :—

*"Yet, shifting like the weather,
The needle's constancy forego
For any novelty and show
Its variations rather."*

P. 424, l. 35. Bull "the needle's variation too."

P. 424, after line 36 H. A. inserts this stanza :—

*"Insensibility makes some
Unseasonably deaf and dumb
When most you need their pity.
'Tis waiting till the tears shall fall
From Gog and Magog in Guildhall,
Those playthings of the City."*

P. 424, l. 39. H. A. :—

*"The attempt would scarce be madder
Should any from the bottom hope
At one huge stride to reach the top
Of an erected ladder."*

P. 425, l. 1. H. A. omits this stanza.

Bull and H. B. read :—

*"Some are so placid and serene
(As Irish bogs are always green)
They sleep secure from waking ;
And are indeed," etc.*

P. 425, l. 11. H. A. :—

*"But which is rarely known to induce,
Like that, a coalescence."*

- P. 425, l. 18.** H. A. :—
*"But even those who differ
 Only on topics left at large"*
- P. 425, l. 16.** Bull and H. B. "points which God l
P. 425, l. 19. Bull and H. B. "at last" Unwin
P. 425, l. 20. H. A. "no great cost of argument."
P. 425, l. 25. H. A. omits this stanza.
P. 425, l. 26. Bull "Some blemish in due time ma
P. 425, l. 31. H. A. "Then judge before you choo
P. 425, l. 34. H. A. "See that no disrespect of yo
P. 425, l. 37. H. A. omits this stanza.
P. 425, l. 39. Bull and H. B. "That constancy bef
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P. 427, l. 1. In place of this last stanza, Bull and H. B. give two as follows :—

*“ The noblest friendship ever shown
The Saviour’s history makes known
Though some have turned and turned it,
And, whether being crazed or blind
Or seeking with a biassed mind
Have not, it seems, discerned it.*

*“ O Friendship, if my soul forgo
Thy dear delights while here below,
To mortify and grieve me
May I myself at last appear
Unworthy, base, and insincere
Or may my friend deceive me ! ”*

P. 427. *The Pipe and the Snuff Box* :—A MS. copy of this piece, not in Cowper’s hand, is among the Welborne MSS. It exhibits no various readings.

P. 428, l. 1. *A Simile* :—With the letter to Unwin of April 27, 1782, in the British Museum. It is there headed “ *The Curate’s Simile Latinized* ” and Cowper after giving it proceeds to expatiate on the “ *dignity of the Roman language* ” and “ *the idea it gives us of the masculine mind of the people that spoke it.* ”

P. 428. *To the Rev. Wm. Bull* :—A MS. copy of this piece, made by Mrs. Greatheed, a friend of both Cowper and Bull, is among the Welborne MSS. It was sent to John Johnson “ *with Mr. Bull’s consent to have it inserted.* ” Its readings are as here. Southey and other editors give “ *It were but folly* ” in line 10. The verses were sent to Bull on June 22, 1782.

Bull was a Nonconformist minister who lived at Newport Pagnell, a few miles from Olney. Cowper had a great affection for him and describes him to Unwin (June 8, 1783) as “ *a dissenter, but a liberal one ; a man of letters and of genius : master of a fine imagination,* ” and so on till the last words : “ *such a man is Mr. Bull. But—he smokes tobacco. Nothing is perfect—Nihil est ab omni Parte beatum.* ”

P. 430. *The Colubriad* :—The story told in these verses is also told in the letter of August 3, 1782.

P. 431. *To a Young Lady* :—These verses were first printed by Mr. Bruce in the Aldine edition 1865. Canon Benham printed a slightly different version in the Globe edition. He obtained it from Mr. Charles Stuart ; and states that it had originally been given by Lady Austen to the Rev. J. A. Knight. It reads, in the third line, “ *a hasty shower,* ” and, in the fourth, “ *beg a refuge.* ” Mr. Wright, in his *Unpublished Poems*, prints the same version as Mr. Bruce, and says the lines were given to him by Mrs. Hipwell, of Olney. He adds that the young lady

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to whom the verses were addressed was Miss Ann Grindon, afterwards Mrs. Grindon. Her descendants still

P. 431. *Epitaph on a Hare* :—The Unwin MS. in C^o the following variations :—

l. 5. "Tiney the surliest."

P. 432, l. 6. "On which he loved."

P. 432, l. 15. "Slumb'ring out."

P. 432, l. 25. "Still more ancient."

The text given is that of the edition of 1800. The printed in the *Gentleman's Magazine*. See the letter of

P. 432. *Royal George* :—See Introduction, page liv. the Latin version which follows, are among the MSS. in the The title as given in the text is that of the MS., which tions except that the poem is written in half the number line being :—

"Toll for the brave, the brave that are no more and the whole being divided into three stanzas, each of these long lines. And this was Cowper's original intention of August 4, 1783, to Unwin where he says: "The disadvantage obliging me to write in Alexandrines; which suit no ear but a French one." The change to the short made it, has certainly been the making of the poem. It that Cowper considered it a ballad and not an ode. John the lines in his 1815 edition, dates them September, 1783

P. 434. *Song in Peace* :—J. Johnson (1815 edition) "written in the summer of 1783, at the request of Lady the Sentiment." To the next poem also he adds the note the request of Lady Austen."

P. 438. *The Valediction* :—This poem is among the Unwin MSS., 24,155, fol. 146). Cowper's severe judgment of his and Colman proved mistaken: see Introduction, p. lv., and December 27, 1785, January 31, 1786, and July 4, 1786, it appears that Colman corrected the press when Cowper the printer's hands.

Southey first printed the poem in full. The right text is "post" as given here, not "part" as given in some "post" in the MS. as well as in Southey. For Thurston p. 220.

George Colman, often spoken of as "Colman the Elder" him from his son, was born in 1732, and died in 1794. He a full dramatist, joint author with Lloyd of the *Odes to Obscurity* written in parody of Gray, and a man of letters of some his works being a translation of Terence. He was one of at the funeral of Johnson.

P. 440. *To the Immortal Memory, etc.* :—The text

that printed by Johnson in the *Private Correspondence*, 1824, vol. i. 321. The Ash MS. in Cowper's hand gives "stout and noble bark" in the ninth line of the poem; and in the eighteenth line, "And we not more that we should feed on thee"; but I have retained Johnson's text which is probably the poet's final version.

P. 441. *The Poplar Field*:—See letters of February 7, 1785, February 28, 1785, and May 1, 1786. The original editions add the following footnote: "Mr. Cowper afterwards altered this last stanza in the following manner:—

‘The change both my heart and my fancy employs,
I reflect on the frailty of man, and his joys;
Short-lived as we are, yet our pleasures, we see,
Have a still shorter date, and die sooner than we.’”

In the *Gentleman's Magazine*, where the piece was first printed, the first line ran, according to Mr. Wright:—

“The poplars are felled and adieu to the shade.”

It is unnecessary to point out the superiority of the later version with its pause on the word "felled"; a pause which may suggest the dead fall of the trees, or the shock to the poet who loved them.

P. 442. *Written on a page of the Monthly Review*:—These lines were sent to the *Record* newspaper, February 20, 1867, by an anonymous correspondent, who believed them to be new. And both Canon Benham in the *Globe* edition, and Mr. Wright in his *Unpublished Poems*, regard this as their first appearance in print. But, as Mr. Wright had himself pointed out in his *Life of Cowper*, they were originally given in the *Rural Walks of Cowper*, 1826, p. 21.

Newton had published an apology for remaining in the Church of England, and the *Monthly Review* had spoken of him as putting forward an argument "with the usual cant of these reformers." Cowper's indignation made him write these lines on a copy that came into his hands.

P. 442. *Epitaph on Dr. Johnson*:—Among the Unwin MSS. with the letter of January 15, 1785. The MS. agrees with the printed text.

P. 443. *On the Author of Letters of Literature*:—See the letters of October 22, and November 5, 1785, in which Cowper expresses his indignation against this individual, who wrote the book in question under the pseudonym of Robert Heron. He was in reality one John Pinkerton. The value of his book, and the measure of his impudence, may be estimated from his assertion that Virgil never wrote a line worth reading.

P. 443. *To Miss Creuxé*:—This poem, sent to Unwin in an undated letter, is among the MSS. in the British Museum (Add. MSS., 24,155, fol. 135). It gives the lady's name in full, which has generally been printed "Miss C." Cowper says of his little piece: "It is serious yet epigrammatic like a bishop at a ball."

P. 443. *Gratitude*:—For Lady Hesketh, see Introduction, pp. xiii, xxi. These lines were first printed by Hayley, vol. ii. 266.

Canon Benham says (Globe Edition, Introduction, p. lxiv.) that the piece, when originally sent to Lady Hesketh, was called "*Benefactions: a poem in Shenstone's manner. Addressed to my dearest Coz, April 14, 1788*"; and that the last two stanzas then ran as follows:—

*"These items endear my abode
Disposing me oft to reflect
By whom they were kindly bestowed
Whom here I impatient expect.
But hush! She a parent attends
Whose dial hand points to eleven,
Who, oldest and dearest of friends,
Waits only a passage to heaven.*

*"Then willingly want her awhile,
And, sweeping the cords of your lyre,
The gloom of her absence beguile,
As now, with poetical fire.
'Tis yours, for true glory athirst,
In high flying ditty to rise
On feathers renowned from the first
For bearing a goose to the skies."*

Ashley Cowper, father of Lady Hesketh and Theodora, was dying at the time, and it is, of course, to this that Cowper alludes. But he was happily inspired when he struck out these two stanzas, and substituted those in the text.

P. 446. *Stanzas Subjoined*, etc.:—The origin of these stanzas, first printed by Bull in 1801 with the translations from Madame Guyon, is humorously related in the letter of November 27, 1787. "A decent elderly figure" appeared one morning at Weston Lodge, and, announcing itself as "clerk of the parish of All Saints, in Northampton, brother of Mr. Cox the upholsterer," begged Cowper to write some verses to be annexed according to custom to the bill of mortality published at Christmas. The poet was amused, and, after at first referring his visitor to the "men of genius" in his own town, and being assured that they were too learned to be understood, accepted the task, commenting, as he finished his story to Lady Hesketh: "a fig for poets who write epitaphs for individuals! I have written one that serves two hundred persons!"

P. 446, l. 21. Southey, Bruce, Bell, and Benham all give "awful truth"; but it is "solemn truth" both in Bull's original edition and in the edition of 1808.

P. 458. *Lines Composed for a Memorial*, etc.:—Among the Ash MSS. as printed here. Among the MSS. in the British Museum (Add. MSS., 30,803 A., fol. 185) is a copy of this poem made by Hayley from a MS. book of Cowper's which Lady Hesketh had sent him. She had not

examined the book before sending it, and he hastens to send her a copy of a poem "so soothing to your heart as an affectionate daughter."

P. 453. *The Negro's Complaint*:—Line 7 "But though thaire" 1803; "but though slave" 1808.

P. 454, l. 22. Mr. Wright (*Correspondence*, iii. 258) says the word in the letter enclosing these verses is "fettors" not "matches."

P. 459. *Sonnet addressed to Henry Cowper, Esq.*:—Henry Cowper, son of the poet's first cousin, General Spencer Cowper, was Clerk of the House of Lords.

The Sonnet was sent to the *Gentleman's Magazine* and signed T. H. (Letters of May 12 and 27, 1788). General Cowper sent the magazine to Cowper, praising "the verses somebody has written," on which the poet confessed the authorship.

P. 459. *The Yearly Distress*:—Among the Unwin MSS. (Add. MSS., 24,155, fol. 140).

P. 461. *On Mrs. Montagu's Feather Hangings*:—Elizabeth Montagu, the hostess of the "Blue-stocking" assemblies, was born in 1720 and died in 1800. Johnson highly praised her conversation but did not share the admiration Cowper expresses for her essay on Shakespeare.

See the letters of May 12 and June 5, 1788, which show that this piece was sent to the *Gentleman's Magazine*.

P. 462, l. 34. "The ruffled plumage" both in 1803 and 1808; but "their ruffled plumage," as printed by later editors must surely be right.

P. 463. *To an Afflicted Protestant Lady*, etc.:—First printed in Bull's little volume, 1801, with the title *An Epistle to a Protestant Lady in France*. This lady was a Mrs. Billacoys, a friend of Lady Austen, at whose desire the poem was written. It was first printed, according to Greathead (*Memoirs of Cowper*, p. 131), in the *Theological Miscellany* for July, 1789. Mrs. Billacoys was apparently of English birth, but, having gone abroad in attendance on Lady Austen, married a Frenchman, M. Billacoys, with whom she was not happy, her husband being a Roman Catholic and she a Protestant of Evangelical views. See the whole account in Greathead's book; and Hayley, ii. 269.

P. 463, l. 3. "Her Creator's" Bull, and so 1803 and 1805; "the Creator's" 1808.

P. 463, l. 18. "Bent upon pleasure" Bull, 1803 and 1805; "bent all on pleasure" 1808.

P. 463, l. 23. "In pity to the sinners he designed" Bull, 1803, 1805.

P. 463, l. 26. "A vale of tears," Bull, 1803, 1805.

P. 463, l. 32. "And sudden sorrow nips" Bull, 1803, 1805.

P. 463, l. 42. "In a distant waste" Bull, 1803, 1805.

P. 463, l. 44. "Shepherd is for ever near" Bull, 1803, 1805.

P. 464, l. 5. "'Twas thus in Gideon's fleece" Bull, 1803, 1805.

Bruce wrongly says the corrections appear in 1803; they appear first in 1808, like so many others.

The lines exist, with the same variations, in Cowper's hand, among the Unwin MSS. in the British Museum. But I have thought it safest to accept the alterations of the 1808 edition which here, as elsewhere, seem almost certainly to be corrections taken from the poet's own MSS.

P. 465. *On the Queen's Visit*:—These verses were presented to Princess Augusta, "who has probably given them to the Queen" (letter of May 30, 1789); but Cowper neither received nor expected any complimentary or other return for them, justly remarking that people "who keep a Laureate in constant pay" cannot be expected to have "either praise or emolument to spare for every volunteer scribbler who may choose to make them his subject."

We know from Mme. D'Arblay's journal that Queen Charlotte had been a reader of Cowper before she saw these verses. See the entry of August 4, 1786, where the Queen reads aloud the passage in *The Task* (Bk. v. 331) beginning: "We too are friends to loyalty" and declares it to be "one of the most just compliments, without extravagance and without coldness, that could be paid to the King."

P. 468. *The Cockfighter's Garland*:—In the late Mr. H. R. Vaughan Johnson's copy of the works of Cowper, he inserted a MS. note in this poem as follows: "In a MS. copy of this poem, in my father's handwriting, and now in the possession of F. Locker, Esq., I find a note in Cowper's own handwriting as follows: 'This piece was sent to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, but recalled on a subsequent suggestion in that work that the story was not well founded, which yet the author has been since informed was perfectly true.'" Mr. Vaughan Johnson was the youngest son of John Johnson, the cousin in whose house Cowper died.

See also the letter of June 6, 1789, where Cowper says both Bull and Greathed were personally acquainted with the facts related.

P. 470. *Lines after the Manner of Homer*:—Sent, with thanks for a hamper, to his friend Samuel Rose, in the letter of October 4, 1789. He says he unpacked the hamper himself and "we diverted ourselves with imagining the manner in which Homer would have described the scene. Detailed in his circumstantial way, it would have furnished materials for a paragraph of considerable length in an *Odyssey*."

P. 470. *Hymn*:—Johnson, who first printed this hymn in his *Posthumous Poems*, 1815, p. 90 of the 12mo edition, gives with it the following note:—

"This hymn was written at the request of the Rev. James Bean, then Vicar of Olney, to be sung by the children of the Sunday Schools of that town, after a charity sermon preached at the Parish Church for their benefit on Sunday, July 31, 1790."

P. 471. *Longing to be with Christ*:—This hymn was first printed in full by Grimshawe in his *Life of Cowper*, vol. viii. 161. It has generally been printed with the Olney Hymns, but is not one of them. A copy of the first four verses of it, in John Johnson's hand, exists among the Welborne

MSS. It gives, in the ninth line, "the bond that detains," instead of "these bonds that detain"; in the eleventh, "the adamant chains" instead of "chain"; and in the fourteenth, "in thy beauty" instead of "in thy glories"; and I have followed these readings as Johnson notes on the MS. which is the same which contains the Latin Alcaics "Heu quam remotus": "The following verses were found in the handwriting of Cowper by Sam Roberts in an old paper book where he used to keep his accounts. They were sent to me by Mr. Courtenay, March 8, 1810." I have left Grimshawe's title, though none is given in the Welborne MS.

P. 473. *Impromptu*:—Among the Unwin MSS. in the British Museum and also among the Ash MSS. in each case as printed.

P. 474. *To Mrs. King*:—See the letter of October 5, 1790. Mr. Wright says that the quilt is now in the Cowper Museum at Olney.

Mrs. King, wife of the Rev. John King, Rector of Portenhall, Beds., had been a friend of Cowper's brother, and, after reading *The Task*, opened a correspondence with the poet, which continued for several years. His first letter to her is dated February 12, 1788, and his last October 14, 1792. She died in 1793.

P. 475. *Stanzas, etc.*:—These stanzas allude to what the article on Milton in the *Dictionary of National Biography* calls "the disgusting exhumation in 1790 of what may have been his body."

P. 476. *In Memory of the late John Thornton, Esq.*:—For Thornton, see the note to p. 170, l. 253.

P. 477. *The Four Ages*:—This subject was suggested to Cowper by the Rev. John Buchanan. See the letters of May 11 and June 23, 1791. Only this fragment was written, but Cowper liked the subject and still thought of completing it when he wrote the sonnet to Hayley, printed on p. 499, which was written on June 20, 1793, in reply to a suggestion that he and Hayley should finish the poem together.

P. 477. *To Rev. Walter Bagot*:—Walter Bagot (1731-1806), Rector of Blithfield, was the third son of Sir Walter Bagot, Bart., brother of Bishop Bagot and of the first Lord Bagot. Another brother, Charles, who took the name of Chester, was Cowper's neighbour at Chicheley. Cowper wrote an epitaph on him at his death in 1792 (see p. 493). Walter Bagot and some of his brothers were the poet's contemporaries at Westminster School. See the note to p. 376.

P. 478, l. 23. Several editions read "must have toiled," but both Hayley (ii. 173) and Johnson in the edition of 1815, give "much have toiled" which is obviously right.

P. 479. *Yardley Oak*. This poem was the most important discovery made by Hayley among the papers left by Cowper. With the MS. which is preserved in the Cowper Museum at Olney, is also the preface by Hayley (see Hayley, iii. 406), in which he quotes a letter written to him by John Johnson in reply to his announcement of its discovery. Johnson writes "Where could these 161 lines lie hid? Till this very day I never heard

of their existence." And Hayley adds: "It is indeed surprising Cowper never mentioned to any one of his most intimate friends the commencement of a poem on a subject that delighted him so much. It must have been written in the year 1791, as other poetical pursuits, particularly his translations from Milton, engrossed his attention in the course of that year." The MS., which is in the poet's hand and carefully put together with interleaved pages, shows, as usual, many corrections, and differs in a few details from the common text. The punctuation and the use of capital letters are, as always, irregular, and here as elsewhere I have followed other editors in adapting them to modern usage. I have not thought it necessary to print the words or passages which Cowper rejected and excised, but those who wish to see them can find them in Mr. Wright's *Unpublished Poems*. Mr. Wright does not mention, however, that the final version of the MS. exhibits some small variations from the common printed text. These will be found mentioned in the notes which follow.

P. 480, l. 2. The printed text gives "relics" but Cowper wrote "reliets" which is plainly right. The forks are not what remains of the ages, but what has been left behind by them. Hayley printed "reliets" correctly; Southey "relics."

P. 480, l. 28. Here the MS. gives "busy scarce" or "scarce" which is presumably only a mistake for "search."

P. 481, ll. 9-18. Something like nonsense has been made of this passage by the way in which it has been punctuated, placing pause marks after "treeship," l. 10, and "globose," l. 15, a full stop after "thee" in l. 17, and a new paragraph at "what exhibitions." Before I saw the MS., my friend Mr. Bruce Richmond pointed out to me that the whole was one sentence, and I find that Cowper wrote it so, and with commas after "treeship" and "globose" and a pause mark after "thee." The new paragraph begins not at l. 18 but at l. 21. The confusion in this case began with Hayley, who was followed by Southey.

P. 481, l. 44. "And planked" is the common text, but the MS. gives "or planked." The mistake is again Hayley's, followed by Southey.

P. 482, ll. 23, 24. "Whose foundation yet Fails not" is Hayley's and the common text. But the MS. gives the plural in both cases.

P. 482, l. 36. "Finds thee" is Hayley's and the usual text. "Thee finds" is that of the MS. which I follow with some hesitation.

P. 483, l. 9. The MS. places a comma after "once," but this is probably only a survival of the first version of the line which was "at once, with look intelligent, surveyed."

P. 483. *Epitaph on Mrs. Higgins*:—For this person, see the letter of June 26, 1791, from which it appears that she was an inhabitant of Weston who had died suddenly. Mr. Wright, in a note to the letter, says that these lines were written for her monument in Weston Church.

P. 487. *On a Late Theft*:—These lines were sent to Mrs. King in the letter of March 8, 1792. The young lady was her niece. There is a copy

of them among the Ash MSS. The poet there entitles the piece "To a Young Lady who stole a Pen from the P. of W.'s Standish." Bruce printed the lines in the Aldine edition, but, not having seen this title, was uncertain who "George" was.

P. 487. *Lines written for Insertion, etc.* :—See the letters of February 20, and March 4, 1792. The third and fourth lines were originally :—

"But write in Patty's book one page
You gain your point for ever."

See also the letter of November 16, 1791. "Patty" was Miss Martha More, sister of Hannah More.

P. 488. *To Sir John Fenn* :—These lines, which appear now for the first time in a collected edition of Cowper, are given here from the original MS. in the Welborne collection. They occur in one of the letters to John Johnson printed in the appendix to the Introduction, that dated March 31, 1792. They have been printed before in the *Universal Review* for June, 1890, and in the *Unpublished Poems* of Mr. Wright who says in his note : "It is unknown to what incident they refer." The letter, however, shows that Sir John Fenn, like Miss Patty More also mentioned in it, was a collector of autographs, or of bits of verse, and that Johnson thought it would please him to have a few lines from Cowper. Cowper's reply is a curious proof of his conscientiousness, even in these trifles.

In an unpublished passage of the next letter to Johnson, that of May 20, he says : "My dearest of all Johnnys, I send you the verses but I believe that had I known what I know now I should hardly have thought it a proper occasion for a compliment of this kind. As it seems to me, the good knight would have been perfectly well contented without it, having never solicited any such honour at my hands, and I am not fond of obtruding myself, especially on strangers. But it pleases you, and that consideration, though it does not prevent my blushes, satisfies all my scruples."

There is also a copy in Cowper's hand among the Ash MSS., from which Mr. Wright printed the lines. Against it J. Johnson has written "the fair copy of this was sent to me in a letter from the author, dated May 20, 1792, and was forwarded by me to Sir John Fenn."

Sir John Fenn was an antiquary and F.S.A. The pedigree of the poet which is on the back of the Abbott portrait at Yaxham is described as "mostly collected from authentic papers in the possession of the family of Donne by Sir John Fenn, Knight and F.S.A." Sir John was the first editor of the *Paston Letters*.

P. 489. *On a Mistake, etc.* :—These lines occur, in Cowper's hand, in the letter to Hill, April 15, 1792. It is worth mentioning that the poet wrote "or rather bold misnomer," as the Globe edition prints "a rather bold."

P. 489. *To William Wilberforce, Esq.* :—This sonnet was originally sent to the *Northampton Mercury* with the letter of April 16, 1792, addressed to the printers of that paper.

Hayley had proposed that he and Cowper should together finish Cowper's unfinished poem *The Four Ages*. See letter of June 20, 1793, with which the Sonnet was sent and Wright's note.

Cowper's friendship with Hayley began in 1792. *The Triumphs of Temper*, Hayley's most successful poetic effort, ran through twelve editions. But his chief claims to remembrance now are his friendship with Cowper and his well-meant patronage of William Blake. His *Life of Cowper* appeared in 1803. He died in 1820.

P. 501. *Answer to Stanzas addressed to Lady Hesketh, etc.* :—Catharine Maria Fanshawe was born in 1765 and died in 1834. She was a woman of considerable literary gifts, in whose conversation and verses Scott found great pleasure, her best-known production being the famous riddle on the letter H, "'Twas whispered in heaven, 'twas muttered in hell." Her *Literary Remains* were printed in 1876.

P. 501. *To a Lady, etc.* :—This poem was first printed in the Globe edition of Cowper, edited by Canon Benham, who had it from Mr. Charles Stuart. The lines, together with a version of these "To a Young Lady, with a present of two cockscombs," were pasted into a copy of the 1793 edition of Cowper's poems, which was given to Mr. Stuart by Mrs. Lyon. This lady, Canon Benham says, "vouched for their genuineness, having received them from the Rev. J. A. Knight, to whom they had been given by Lady Austen." Lady Austen was of course the lady to whom the verses were addressed. I think it is certain that Cowper was never in love with Lady Austen ; but such lines, sent to a woman to whom he had no thought of proposing marriage, are alone sufficient to explain the brief and troubled course of the friendship which did more than any other to make Cowper a great poet.

Messrs. Macmillan & Co. have very kindly made no objection to the inclusion of the piece in this edition. It has not been printed before, except in the Globe edition and in Mr. Wright's *Unpublished Poems*.

P. 503. *To Mary* :—The MS. of these well-known lines has been presented to the Cowper Museum at Olney by Mr. E. P. Ash. It exhibits two variations from the text first printed by Hayley in his *Life* (1803), vol. ii. 194. In the ninth stanza Cowper wrote "Partakers of the sad decline," not "thy sad decline" as printed ; and after this stanza occurs the following stanza :—

"And then I feel that still I hold
A richer store ten thousand fold
Than misers fancy in their gold,
My Mary."

The question is whether these lines were struck out by Cowper, or by Hayley. It is just possible that the poet thought they interfered with the natural sequence from the "hands" of stanza nine to the "limbs" of the

stanzas which h
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"To the B
Songs of the
dedicated by
1782." Cowp

vail " is corrected to the lines in the text ; and in the last line " proves " is altered to " makes."

Similar instances occur in other poems ; and therefore it seems plain that Bull's is the later and more authorised text.

P. 522, l. 17. " Whose heart is warned by thee " MS ; the word written is " warned " not " warmed."

P. 522, last line. " Ungrateful man " MS.

P. 523, l. 8. *Living Water* :—Some editors, as Benham, have followed the edition of 1806, in which these translations first appeared with the collected works of the poet, in giving this line as follows : " At evening they are dry." But it has seemed best to follow Bull. There is no Ash MS. of this poem.

P. 523, l. 15. " Whom men oppose " MS.

P. 523, l. 23. " Because reproach and grief and pain
Are sure to follow in your train." MS.

P. 524, l. 10. " In caves of central night " MS.

P. 525, l. 4. " My long long banishment " MS.

P. 525, l. 31. " Though man and devil both " MS.

P. 526, l. 3. " How pure the joy " MS.

P. 526, l. 11. " It still is visible and clear " MS.

P. 526, l. 31. " 'Tis love connects " MS.

P. 527, l. 32. " Of sordid self " MS.

P. 528, l. 3. " Plung'd into the Depths " Bull, which can hardly be right. There is no Ash MS. of this piece. " Plunged in thy depths " 1806.

P. 529. *Repose in God* :—On the back of the Ash MS. of this translation are the following lines. They appear to have no connection with Madame Guyon's poems, and are probably the opening lines of some early poem which was never corrected or finished.

Against Interested Love.

" Who does not blush when charged with selfish views ?

Man boasts for man a principle of love ;

But each with God a different course pursues,

Short interest is the spring by which they move.

Oh blindness of our mean and stupid race !

The selfish and the sordid we despise

And yet the love of God incurs disgrace

While love to man is sounded to the skies.

How speaks the world ? In friendship's sacred cause

A generous service is its own reward,

A maxim all have stamped with their applause.

How speaks the world ? My dear and valued friend,

My recompense is found in serving you.

The lines have not been printed before except in Mr. Wright's *Unpublished Poems*.

- P. 531, l. 9. "From yonder wilds" MS.
- P. 531, l. 11. "Forgetting all their mirth" MS.
- P. 532, ll. 1, 2. "Since we must sorrow and why not
For me I wish no gentler lot" MS.
- P. 532, l. 7. "No succour" MS.
- P. 533, l. 13. "Her lovely face" MS.
- P. 533, l. 18. "Those who seek" MS.
- P. 533, l. 25. "I bring an offering to thy shrine" MS.
- P. 535, title of poem. *The Secrets of Divine Love are not to be divulged*, MS.
- P. 535, l. 3 of same poem. "Fear to divulge such love as mine" MS.
- P. 535, l. 18 of same poem. "Darts its fires" MS.
- P. 537, l. 19. "Ye Lambs that wander in these shades" MS.
- P. 537, l. 38. "Sunk fathom-line" MS.
- P. 538. *The Vicissitudes*, etc. :—The MS. version of this poem differs more than any other from the version printed by Bull. But here, as elsewhere, it is much closer to Bull's version than the first thoughts which are still legible in it! and are frequently erased in favour of the rendering found in Bull. The readings peculiar to it are as follows :—
- P. 538, l. 32. "Points my pain" MS.
- P. 538, l. 36. "Fear, anxious fear, increases every hour" MS.
- P. 539, l. 7. "Come thou, with all thy sacred charms, come yet" MS.
- P. 539, l. 9. "He flies me far—he treats me as his foe" MS.
- P. 539, l. 19. "All is affliction, all is blank despair,
Life at its lowest ebb, and death denied" MS.
- P. 539, l. 23. "Dangerous beauties" MS.
- P. 539, l. 26. "Stupid and ignorant" MS.
- P. 539, l. 31. "Anxious and uninformed" MS.
- P. 539, l. 33. "I suffer not, I truly love" MS.
- P. 539, l. 34. "Celestial flame" MS.
- P. 539, l. 40. "A sea of doubt" MS.
- P. 540, l. 1. "I neither wish for life nor yet for death" MS.
- P. 540, l. 2. Illegible words in place of "thine hand."
- P. 540, l. 3. "A single breath" MS.
- P. 540, l. 5. "Captive I groan" MS.
- P. 540, l. 6. "Am sick and cannot find the ailing part" MS.
- P. 540, l. 7. "I seem as void" MS.
- P. 540, l. 9. "Ask ye my soul's opinion of her state,
She answers, of her state she nothing knows—
Time was she lived by Faith, but finds of late
In self-forgetfulness her best repose" MS.
- P. 540, l. 13. "She either floats at random, or she sinks
By her own weight, without a wish to rise" MS.
- P. 540, l. 15. "Indifference worse than death" MS.
- P. 540, l. 18. "No transient dream" MS.

- P. 540, l. 19. "Ths Love inflicts it, whose seraphic flame
Felt in the soul is happiness supreme" MS.
- P. 540, l. 23. "That gloomy scene" MS.
- P. 540, l. 24. "Then neither tempests howl nor billows roll" MS.
- P. 540, l. 26. "Once more draw nigh" MS.; in this case "appear,"
Bull's reading, has been erased.
- P. 540, l. 27. "Disperse the night" MS.
- P. 540, l. 28. "Abyss of darkness where I lie" MS.
- P. 540, l. 29. "Will no longer hear" MS.
- P. 540, l. 31. "Wounds me, is become severe" MS.
- P. 540, l. 32. "Makes (?) me and leaves me weary, sick, and faint"
MS. I am not sure whether the first word is "makes" or "breaks" or
something else.
- P. 541, l. 1. "What, leave me, when" MS.
- P. 541, l. 5. "That I deplore" MS.
- P. 541, l. 7. "While humbly I adore" MS.
- P. 541, l. 9. "Thine explicitly and simply" MS.
- P. 541, l. 10. "So strictly that it is not now my own" MS.
- P. 541, l. 17. "'Tis wholly thine" MS.
- P. 541, l. 21. "Love, sacred love" MS.
- P. 541, l. 32. "The award is just and I applaud the blow" MS.
- P. 542, l. 13. "Life, with all its busy stir" MS.
- P. 542, l. 15. "Fresh perplexities occur" MS.
- P. 542, l. 23. "Wish the hours of light away" MS.
- P. 543, l. 12. "Or sprightly psalm" MS.
- P. 543, l. 16. "Caused to languish" MS.
- P. 543, l. 17. "How I love this peaceful season" MS.
- P. 543, l. 19. "For to me the world with reason" MS.
- P. 543, l. 20. "Seems an evil" MS.
- P. 543, l. 21. "Its discourses grieve and hurt me" MS.
- P. 543, l. 25. "Me they coarse esteem" MS.
- P. 544, l. 13. "Of the Lord's inspiring" MS.
- P. 544, l. 18. "My spirit" MS. This is probably the true reading.
Bull gives "my spirita."
- P. 545, l. 9. "Is the soul's estate" MS.
- P. 545, l. 10. "That thwarts" MS.
- P. 545, l. 21. "Let reason sleep the livelong night" MS.
- P. 546, l. 1. "Obedient to thy love's sweet force
My rapid hours pursue their course" MS.
- P. 546, l. 23. "And all beside" MS.
- P. 547, l. 14. "That deathless flame" MS.
- P. 547, l. 15. "Which thou inspir'st alone" MS.
- P. 547, l. 18. "My pleasure and my crown" MS.
- P. 547, l. 33. "Ah tell me, King of Kings" MS.
- P. 548, l. 5. The MS. has no title to this poem. Bull heads *Simple
Trust*.

P. 549, l. 10. "Was become my sole employ" MS.

P. 549, l. 20. "Seemed to watch no heart beside" MS.

P. 549, l. 36. "Passes all his sins beside" MS.

P. 551. *Scenes Favourable*, etc. :—There is a MS. of this poem in the British Museum (Add. MSS., 24,155, fol. 148). In the notes below BM refers to this MS., Ash to the Ash MS.

P. 551, l. 27. "Here freely contemplate" BM.

P. 552, l. 2. "Love wastes me and wears me away" BM.

P. 552, l. 6. "My sorrows are safely rehearsed," the reading of Bull's 1801 edition, is plainly right, though many of the editors have followed the edition of 1806 in giving "sadly" instead of "safely."

P. 552, l. 20. "Whether owing to sorrow or joy" Ash.

P. 552, l. 21. "I am weak, there is nothing I seem to discern" Ash.

P. 552, l. 25. "I live and yet seem" BM.

P. 552, l. 35. "For where among all I have left" Ash.

P. 553. The translations of Milton's Latin and Italian verses were undertaken in connection with the edition of Milton which Cowper was to have done for Johnson the publisher. It was to be a sort of rival to Boydell's Shakespeare. The only part of the work which was completed, except a few notes, was the English rendering of these poems, which was made during the winter and spring of 1791-2, and revised with Hayley during Cowper's visit to Eartham in the summer of 1792. The translations were left unpublished by Cowper and were first printed by Hayley at Chichester in 1808, in a volume entitled *Latin and Italian Poems of Milton translated into English verse, by the late William Cowper, Esq.* The book is a beautiful quarto, with designs by Flaxman. It contains the translations, then the Latin and Italian originals; then Cowper's commentary on *Paradise Lost*, intended for the edition which was never accomplished; and finally notes on the Latin and Italian poems by Cowper and Hayley, as well as some taken from the editions of Todd and Warton.

The MS. of the translations is in the British Museum (Add. MSS., 30,801). I have carefully collated it throughout, and record below the instances in which the printed text varies from it. It gives four renderings which Hayley did not print; two of the epigrams on Morus and Salmasius ("Galli ex concubitu" and "gaudete scombri") which one may feel sure neither Milton nor Cowper would wish to see reprinted; and two of a couple of small Greek pieces by Milton which I have inserted at the end of the translations from the Latin poems, on p. 596.

The MS. is in Cowper's hand, with many corrections in Hayley's hand, many of these being again corrected by Cowper. In a good many of the cases in which Hayley's correction has been allowed to stand it appears to me markedly inferior to Cowper's original rendering. For instance, the original in p. 556, l. 13, was:—

"They suit not me these bare unshadowed plains,
Ah, how unfriendly to the poet's pains,"

which is certainly not improved by being altered into:—

*"Nor aught of pleasure in these fields have I
That to the musing bard all shade deny."*

And in p. 561, l. 19, Hayley's—

*"My friend and favourite inmate of my heart
That now is forced to want its better part,"*

is no improvement on Cowper's—

*"My friend, my other self—alas, my heart—
How is it forced to want its better part."*

And Cowper's original rendering of p. 564, l. 38:—

*"Night creeps not now, but runs a shorter race
Athwart the pole, and with a swifter pace,"*

is free from the obscurity of Hayley's printed version:—

*"Night creeps not now, yet rules with gentle sway
And drives her dusky horrors swift away."*

These, and other cases, might have tempted me to restore Cowper's original rendering throughout, but for the fact that in an immense number of cases Cowper has struck out Hayley's corrections and made a final translation himself. For instance, the text as printed by Hayley 1808, which is that followed in the later editions, is in all the following cases, as well as many others, that substituted by Cowper for Hayley's version: P. 555, ll. 35, 36; p. 558, ll. 94, 95; p. 563, ll. 89, 90; p. 563, ll. 93, 94; p. 563, ll. 99-102, 121, 122; p. 564, ll. 47, 48; p. 565, ll. 55-57; p. 567, ll. 25-26; p. 568, ll. 49-52; p. 568, ll. 77, 78; p. 581, l. 99; p. 582, ll. 121-123; p. 584, ll. 17-23; p. 585, ll. 33-36; p. 585, ll. 52-55; p. 587, ll. 8-10; p. 590, ll. 175-178.

These numerous final corrections by Cowper, followed in all cases by Hayley when he printed the translations, must be allowed to give Cowper's authority to the whole. However inferior, therefore, Hayley's corrections, have appeared to me to be to Cowper's first renderings, where Cowper left them, I have left them, except in one case, p. 596, on which a special note is given. It is true that John Johnson, in a letter written from Weston to his sister in 1792 or 1793 (*Letters of Lady Hesketh concerning William Cowper*, p. 22) speaks with great indignation of Hayley's alterations, and justly objects to the substitution of Hayley's "fimsy tinsel lines" for "the bold and forcible language of our dear Bard." But it is evident from what he says that the text as he saw it at that time had not received Cowper's final corrections, for he says nothing of them and implies that all Hayley's alterations stood untouched, and that he accordingly had reluctantly to insert them in the fair copy he was making for the press. But this fair copy, if, as is probable, it is that in the Museum to be mentioned presently, was made before Cowper revised the translations. And the fact that John Johnson when he reprinted the translations in 1815, followed the text as given by Hayley in 1808, seems to show that he, who is almost certain to have known the truth, believed that Hayley had printed the

followed by all subsequent editors, with no variations, so far as I know, except those due to misprints. Bruce, who so often gives varieties of reading, here gives no textual notes, and does not appear to have seen the original MS. which, indeed, did not come into the possession of the British Museum until 1878. The present is, I believe, the first collation of the MS., and its readings, where they differ from the printed text, are here given for the first time. The MS. also contains the notes appended by Cowper to his translations, which Hayley published in the 1808 edition. There are also a few notes in Lady Hesketh's handwriting which is not unlike Cowper's. They may be found, for instance, at foll. 69, 83, and 98, of the MS. Only one is of any interest, that in which she says she knows "by the writing that the alterations were made lately." This refers to the fact, related by Hayley in the Preface to the 1808 edition, that "during the last sad years in Norfolk Johnson induced Cowper to retouch a few passages, and that one of them was the last four lines of the Ode to Rouse, which were written as they now stand on August 22, 1798." These lines are in fact traced in a weak and broken hand; and, in pencil, in John Johnson's writing, the date "August 22, 98, after dinner" is added. Another of these corrections made during the last months of Cowper's life is the passage beginning "We only, an obdurate kind," line 149 of the Elegy on Damon, which also betrays the feebleness of the hand that wrote it, and also has its date appended by Johnson "August 21, after supper."

Bound up with the MS. is a fair copy of them, part of which is in John Johnson's hand. It is, however, of no authority, as it frequently gives Hayley's versions where in the MS. these have been struck out and re-written by Cowper. This occurs, for instance, in the following passages among others: P. 585, l. 29; p. 585, ll. 33-36; p. 590, ll. 167, 168; p. 590, ll. 175-178. In the last case it even gives two of the lines in Cowper's original version before the first correction by Hayley.

It was therefore evidently made before the final revision and is of no importance.

P. 555, l. 1. It has not, so far as I know, been pointed out that a stanza of the original is omitted here. The MS. shows that it was translated, and that the version was erased and no correction substituted. The stanza is the seventh of the Italian original, that which begins:—

*"Di bella gloria amante
Milton, dal ciel natio."*

P. 555, l. 12. The MS. here gives, in Cowper's hand, "That not themselves can boast a richer store" but the line is two syllables short of the number required. I have, therefore, followed the printed text.

P. 555, l. 42. Here again Cowper, in a final correction of Hayley, though not in his original rendering, got the metre two syllables short by leaving out the word "falt'ring."

P. 559. *On the Death of the Bishop of Winchester*:—The Bishop, on whose death this was written, was Lancelot Andrewes.

P. 564, ll. 7, 8. "Seems" and "themes" in the common text, but the "seem" and "theme" of the MS. is certainly right.

P. 564, l. 20. "Tartarean gulfs" in the printed text, but "depths" in the MS.

P. 564, l. 35. "This" is the common text, but "his" is that both of the MS., and of the original edition 1808. This is the only case I have noticed of the common text differing from that of 1808.

P. 565, l. 80. "Playing in the western deep" printed text; "plunging" MS.

P. 566, l. 136. "Thunder" printed text.

P. 566, l. 40. "Dancers" printed text.

P. 568, l. 74. "Train" printed text.

P. 570, l. 44. "Reach" printed text.

P. 575, l. 26. "Where thou canst not appear" printed text.

P. 577, l. 36. "Himself" in the printed text, but here the capital letter of the original seems important, as the reference is to Dia.

P. 578, ll. 74, 75. That is, as Cowper explains in a note, Hyacinthus and Adonis.

P. 582, ll. 121-123. This is one of the cases where Cowper made a final correction of Hayley, and he has written opposite it in the MS. "Sure this is a happy alteration."

P. 582, l. 144. "Your master's funeral, not soon absorbed" printed text.

P. 583, l. 11. Here Cowper originally wrote:—

*"Where Eurus, fellest wind, no pause allows
To his rude lungs but unremitting blows."*

Hayley then corrected to:—

*"Where Eurus, harbinger of plagues and death,
Scatters perdition with his baleful breath,"*

which Cowper again erased and wrote the present text.

P. 584, Manse. 17. "Nor this contented thee" etc.:—Here, again, the version ultimately printed is a correction in Cowper's hand of that by Hayley. It is indeed the last correction of many, some of which are in Hayley's hand, and some in Cowper's. The fair copy gives yet another which does not appear to agree with any exactly, but follows in the last lines Hayley's version erased by Cowper.

P. 587. *On the Death of Damon*:—Of this beautiful piece in which Milton poured forth his sorrow for the death of his greatest friend, a far deeper and more personal sorrow than that which was the occasion of *Lycidas*, Cowper was a great admirer, boldly calling it "a pastoral in my judgment equal to any of Virgil's *Bucolica*." (Letter of December 10, 1791.)

P. 589, l. 127. "Chloris too came" printed text.

P. 596. These two translations, *The Philosopher and the King*, and *On the Engraver of his Portrait*, are printed here for the first time. After Milton's lines to his father, there are—printed among his Latin poems—three pieces in Greek verse, a rendering of Psalm cxiv., and these two pieces. In the corresponding MS. of Cowper at the British Museum (Add. MSS., 30,801, fol. 61, 62), I find that he did not translate the Psalm, saying it needed no translation, but that he made these renderings of the other two Greek pieces. Why Hayley did not include them, when he published all the others except two rather objectionable epigrams, it is now impossible to say. In the case of the Epigram on the Engraver of his Portrait, I have ventured to prefer the translation as Cowper originally wrote it to Hayley's free correction, which is as follows:—

*"Survey my features: you will own it clear
That little skill has been exerted here;
My friends who know me not here smile to see
How ill the model and the work agree."*

The fact that Hayley printed no translation of the epigram in the 1808 edition would have tempted me to think that his correction in this case was made later than in others, and that, as it had not received Cowper's approval, he did not think it right to print it. But the fair copy bound up with the original at the Museum, part of which is in John Johnson's hand, here gives Hayley's rendering though in many other cases it does not give the latest corrections, even Cowper's own. Hayley's version, therefore, was probably made when the others were made, and may have been approved by Cowper. Or Cowper may have decided to omit the translation altogether, and therefore took no trouble to revise it.

P. 600. *Translations from Vincent Bourne*:—For Vincent Bourne see note to p. 231.

P. 600. *On the Picture of a Sleeping Child*:—This piece was first published in Croft's *Early Poems*, 1625, and has generally been placed with the other poems coming from that volume. But it seems more convenient to print it with the other translations from Bourne.

P. 612. *The Cantab*:—A MS. of this in the poet's hand is in the British Museum (Add. MSS., 24,154, il. 150). In the third line it omits the word "for"; in the fourth it gives "Part paid into hand"; in the tenth, "is barked at and laughed at"; and in the fifteenth, "gentleman" instead of "gentlemen."

Here, as elsewhere, the explanation no doubt is that Cowper made several versions with small variations.

P. 614, l. 22. *Verses to the Memory of Dr. Lloyd*:—"Etd superbum nec vivo tibi." The line is a foot too long, and there does not appear to be any way of putting the metre right, such as I have suggested in the case of the unmetrical line in the *Montes Glaciales*. The lines are said by

P. 630, l. 221. The 1815 edition reads "triple form'd Geryon" which makes a false quantity in the name.

P. 634, l. 382. "Placed where thou seest me. Phœbus, and;" the line is two syllables short but so, apparently, Cowper left it.

P. 634, l. 399. "Where once" the 1815 edition, followed without comment by Bruce and Benham, but obviously a misprint.

P. 635. *The Salad*:—"This poem," says Hayley, who first printed it in his *Life of Cowper*, "was translated into English by Cowper during his oppressive malady, June, 1799; and to those who are used to philosophise on the powers of the human mind under affliction, it will appear a highly interesting curiosity." It will be remembered that Cowper died in April, 1800.

P. 656. *Translation of an Epigram of Homer*:—This translation was first printed by Johnson, in his 1815 edition (p. 103 of the 12mo edition). He gives the following prose heading, which is presumably Cowper's: "Certain potters, while they were busied in baking their ware, seeing Homer at a small distance, and having heard much said of his wisdom, called to him and promised him a present of their commodity, and of such other things as they could afford, if he would sing to them, when he sang as follows."

Johnson also gives this note:—

"No title is prefixed to this piece, but it appears to be a translation of one of the *Ἐπιγράμματα* of Homer called *Ὁ Κάμπος* or the Furnace. The prefatory lines are from the Greek of Herodotus, or whoever was the author of the *Life of Homer* ascribed to him." The epigram will be found among those ascribed to Homer, with the title *Κάμπος ἢ Κέραμος*. It begins:—

εἴ μοι δώσετε μισθόν, αἰίσω, ὦ κεραμῆες.

P. 660. *Translations of Dryden*:—In the MS. copy of these lines sent to Unwin and now in the British Museum, the last words of the fourth line are written "utrisque parem," a mere slip of the pen probably.

P. 660. *Motto for a Clock*:—"This first appeared in Hayley's *Life of Cowper*, ii. 415 (1803). See the letter of August 9, 1788, where Cowper says: "I have been employed this morning in composing a Latin motto for the King's clock; the embellishments of which are by Mr. Bacon." Canon Benham says the clock is now at Windsor.

The English rendering is by Hayley.

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	<i>Text.</i>	<i>Notes.</i>
Sweet Babe, whose image here expressed	600	726
Sweet bird, whom the Winter constrains	605	—
Sweet meat has sour sauce	457	—
Sweet Nymph who art, it seems, accused	487	—
Sweet stream that winds	218	686
Sweet tenants of this grove	547	721
Symptoms of love	15	—
Table talk	90	676-8
Take to Thy Bosom	645	—
Tale, A	496	—
Tale, founded on a fact which happened in January, 1779	411	—
Tears flow and cease not	493	713
Tears of a painter, The	610	—
Testimony of Divine Adoption	526	719
Thankless for favours from on high	450	—
That ocean you of late surveyed	415	699
The Bard, if e'er he feel at all	474	—
The beams of April, ere it goes	608	—
The billows swell, the winds are high	58	—
The birds put off their every hue	461	—
The fountain in its source	523	719
The genius of the Augustan age	443	706
The greenhouse is my summer seat	401	697
The lady thus addressed her spouse	236	689
The Lord proclaims His grace abroad	41	—
The Lord receives His highest praise	73	—
The Lord will happiness divine	38	—
The lover in melodious voices	612	—
The room was shady and soft airs	409	—
The new-born child of Gospel grace	72	—
The nymph must lose her female friend	226	688
The pineapples in triple row	229	688
The poplars are felled	441	706
The rose had been washed, just washed in a shower	395	697
The saints should never be dismayed	33	—
The Saviour hides His face	61	—
The Saviour, what a noble fame	52	—
The Shepherd touched his reed	606	—
The sparkling eye, the mantling cheek	2	—
The Spirit breathes upon the Word	53	—
The straw-stuffed hamper with his ruthless steel	470	709
The suitors sinned, but with a fair excuse	501	—
The swallows in their torpid state	238	—
The twentieth year is well-nigh past	502	715
The winter night now well-nigh worn away	635	—
Thee, whose refulgent staff and summons clear	558	—
There is a bird who by his coat	232	—
There is a Book, which we may call	601	—
There is a field through which I often pass	404	—
There is a fountain filled with the blood	42	—
There is in souls a sympathy with sounds	340	694
There's not an echo round me	519	718
There was a time when Aetna's silent fire	240	689
These are not dew-drops	488	—
These critics who to faith no quarter grant	442	706
These verses also to thy praise the nine	584	725

	<i>Text.</i>	<i>Notes.</i>
They call thee rich, I deem thee poor	649	—
Another	650	—
They mock my toil, the nymphs and amorous swains	598	—
Thief, On a	653	—
Think, Delia, with what cruel haste	15	665, 70
This cap, that so stately appears	443	706
This is the feast of heavenly wine	51	—
Thornton, In memory of	476	710
Thou hast no lightnings, O Thou Just	524	719
Thou magic lyre, whose fascinating sound	7	669
Though nature weigh our talents, and dispense	179	683, 4
Though once a puppy	492	—
Thracian, The	600	726
Thracian parents, at his birth	600	726
Thrive, gentle plant	493	—
Throckmorton, Mrs.	473	—
Thus Italy was moved—nor did the chief	625	727
Thus says the prophet of the Turk	225	687
Thy country, Wilberforce, with just disdain	489	712
Thy nausea is the Christian's heat	44	—
Time, never wandering from his annual round	563	725
Time-piece, The	266	691, 2
Time was when I was free as air	228	688
Tirocinium	368	695
'Tis folly all, let me not more be told	511	716-8
'Tis morning and the sun with ruddy orb	320	693, 4
'Tis my happiness below	57	—
'Tis not that I design to rob	8	669
To Babylon's proud waters brought	28	—
To be remembered thus is fame	501	715
To grass, or leaf, or fruit or wall	611	—
To Jesus, the Crown of my Hope	471	709
To keep the lamp alive	75	—
To lay the soul that loves him low	534	—
To purify their wine some people bleed	459	—
To tell the Saviour all thy wants	65	—
To those who know the Lord I speak	55	—
To watch the storms and hear the sky	429	—
Toll for the brave	432	705
Tomb of Mr. Hamilton, Inscription for	453	—
Too many, Lord, abuse Thy grace	74	675
Traveller, regret me not	649	—
Tres trea, sed longe distantia, sæcula vates	660	728
Trial of Admiral Keppel, On the	412	698
Triumph of Heavenly Love desired	517	—
Trust me, the meed of praise, dealt thriftily	7	—
Truth	120	679, 80
'Twas a long journey lay before us	617	727
'Twas in the glad season of spring	456	—
Two neighbours furiously disputed	607	—
Two nymphs both nearly of an age	478	—
Two omens seem propitious	488	712
Two poets (poets, by report)	490	713
Two powdered cockscombs wait at your command	431	704
Ugly Fellow, On an	653	—
Unwin, I should but ill repay	244	689
Unwin, To Mrs.	494	—

	<i>Text.</i>	<i>Notes.</i>
Valediction	439	705
Venerable Rival, Upon a	5	—
Verses, written, &c.	1	668
Verses (supposed to be written by Alexander Selkirk)	218	686
Vicissitudes experienced in the Christian Life	538	720
Votum	228	—
Warren Hastings, To	489	—
Watching unto God	541	721
Weak and irresolute is man	221	687
What is there in the vale of life	84	676
What nature, alas ! has denied	236	689
What portents, from what distant region ride	505	—
What thousands never knew the road	74	—
What various hindrances we meet	52	—
What virtue or what mental grace	422	700-4
When all within is peace	435	—
When Aeilus, the nocturnal thief	653	—
When darkness long has veiled my mind	60	—
When Hagar found the bottle spent	69	675
When, long sequestered from his throne	465	709
When the British warrior Queen	239	689
When wit and genius meet their doom	224	—
Whence is it that amazed I hear	486	—
Where hast thou floated	440	—
Where Humber pours his real Commercial stream	411	—
While thirteen moons saw smoothly run	446	707
Why weeps the Muse for England ? What appears	132	680-2
Wilberforce, To	489	712
Wilds horrid and dark with o'er-shadowing trees	551	722
William was once a bashful youth	12	670
Winter evening, The	303	692, 3
Winter has a joy for me	77	—
Winter morning walk, The	320	693, 4
Winter nosegay, The	236	689
Winter walk at noon	340	694
With no rich viands overcharged I send	567	725
With seeds and birdlime	649	—
With two spurs or one	612	726
Would my Delia know if I love, let her take	15	665
"Write to Sardis," saith the Lord	47	—
✓ Yardley Oak	479	710, 1
Ye Linnets, let us try, beneath this grove	515	718
Ye nymphs of Hemera (for ye have shed)	587	725
Ye sister powers, who o'er the sacred groves	578	725
Ye sons of earth, prepare the plough	43	—
Yearly Bill of Mortality, Stanzas on	446	707
A second	447	—
Yearly Distress, The	459	708
You bid me write to amuse the tedious hours	638	—
You give your cheeks a rosy stain	653	—
You told me I remember glory, built	90	676-8
Young Friend, To a	496	—
Young lady, To a	218, 431	704

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